WORKING PAPERS IN

Early Childhood Development

42

Outcomes of good practice in transition processes for children entering primary school

by Hilary Fabian and Aline-Wendy Dunlop

Bernard van Leer Foundation

About the paper

The transition to primary school is one of the greatest challenges of early childhood. Handled well, it can set children into a virtuous cycle of learning. But how can transitions be made more effective? Based on a background paper for UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007, this paper assesses the literature and draws lessons about ways of forging links between primary schools, children's home environments and early childhood programmes.

Starting from Bronfenbrenner's systems theory, the authors identify different models for looking at transitions and present an overview of research, covering such topics as inclusion and resilience. They go on to consider the perspectives of the key actors in transitions – children, educators and parents – and present examples of successful initiatives from twenty countries and regions around the world.

The authors then identify lessons learned from their analysis of successful initiatives, including the importance of children's social competencies, their capacity to make transitions with existing friends and to make new friendships, planning transition activities, and communication between schools, pre-schools and parents in advance of children's transitions. The paper concludes by identifying implications for policy planning and implementation, including suggestions for schools.

Cover: Young girl in a government primary school in Saeedpur, Bangladesh. Photo: SHEHZAD NOORANI /Lineair

Design: Valetti, vormgeving en communicatie, The Hague, The Netherlands

42

WORKING PAPERS IN

Early Childhood Development

Outcomes of good practice in transition processes for children entering primary school

By Hilary Fabian and Aline-Wendy Dunlop

May 2007

Bernard van Leer Foundation

About the author

Dr **Hilary Fabian** is Head of Education and Childhood Studies at the North East Wales Institute. She taught young children in England and Germany for 20 years; since 1991 she has worked in higher education in England, Scotland and Wales. Her MSc and PhD theses, books and journal publications reflect her interest in transitions, particularly children starting school, children transferring between schools and the way in which the induction process to new settings is managed.

Professor **Aline-Wendy Dunlop** is Chair of Childhood and Primary Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Strathclyde, where she leads on applied educational research and teaching and learning. After training as a primary teacher she specialised in early childhood education, latterly as a head teacher. She has researched and published in autism, early childhood and particularly in transitions – she began her longitudinal study of transitions in 1996.

Citation

Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A-W. 2007. Outcomes of good practice in transition processes for children entering primary school. Working Paper 42. Bernard van Leer Foundation: The Hague, The Netherlands.

This paper is based on a background paper prepared by the authors for UNESCO's *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007. Strong foundations: early childhood care and education.* ISBN 978-92-3-104041-2. The original paper is available in PDF format at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001474/147463e.pdf. This is the second of a series of two Working Papers based on Bernard van Leer Foundation-commissioned background papers for the UNESCO report. The first, entitled *Is everybody ready? Readiness, transition and continuity: Reflections and moving forward,* was published as Working Paper 41.

ISSN 1383-7907

ISBN 978-90-6195-096-7

Contents

Introduction

The start of primary schooling has been perceived as one of the most important transitions in a child's life and a major challenge of early childhood. Initial success at school, both socially and intellectually, leads to a virtuous cycle of achievement (Burrell and Bubb 2000) and can be a critical factor in determining children's adjustment to the demands of the school environment and future progress (Ghaye and Pascal 1989). A range of authors (Fabian and Dunlop 2002a; Dunlop and Fabian 2003) propose that the way in which transitions are experienced not only makes a difference to children in the early months of a new situation, but may also have much longer-term impact, because the extent to which they feel successful in the first transition is likely to influence subsequent experiences. While the age of starting school varies (for example, in New Zealand children start school on their fifth birthday, but in Finland, they do not start school until they are 7), studies from countries in Europe, from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, and the USA (www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/LED/tec), identify that, no matter how different the systems of institutional education, school entry has turned out to be a significant developmental step for children and their families.

Transition is often seen as an ecological concept (Bronfenbrenner 1979) comprising a series of nested structures (microsystems) linked together in a network (the mesosystem) and influenced by the wider society (the macrosystem). In other words, an interlocking set of systems comprising home, nursery and school, through which children travel in their early years of education.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that "an ecological transition occurs whenever a person's position in the ecological environment is altered as the result of a change in role, setting or both". This is important because he says "public policy has the power to affect the well-being and development of human beings by determining the conditions of their lives" (1979, p.xiii). Two of his hypotheses are significant for the transition to school: Hypothesis 27 states that "the developmental potential of a setting in a mesosystem is enhanced if the person's initial transition into that setting is not made alone" (1979, p.211); and Hypothesis 42 states that "upon entering a new setting, the person's development is enhanced to the extent that valid information, advice, and experience relevant to one setting are made available, on a continuing basis, to the other" (1979, p.217). This links with the work of Basil Bernstein (1990), about knowing the rules, because in order to succeed in the education system children need to be told the rules of the system; for example about the curriculum, the pedagogy and ways of evaluating.

Bronfenbrenner's systems theory is useful in helping us to understand that optimal

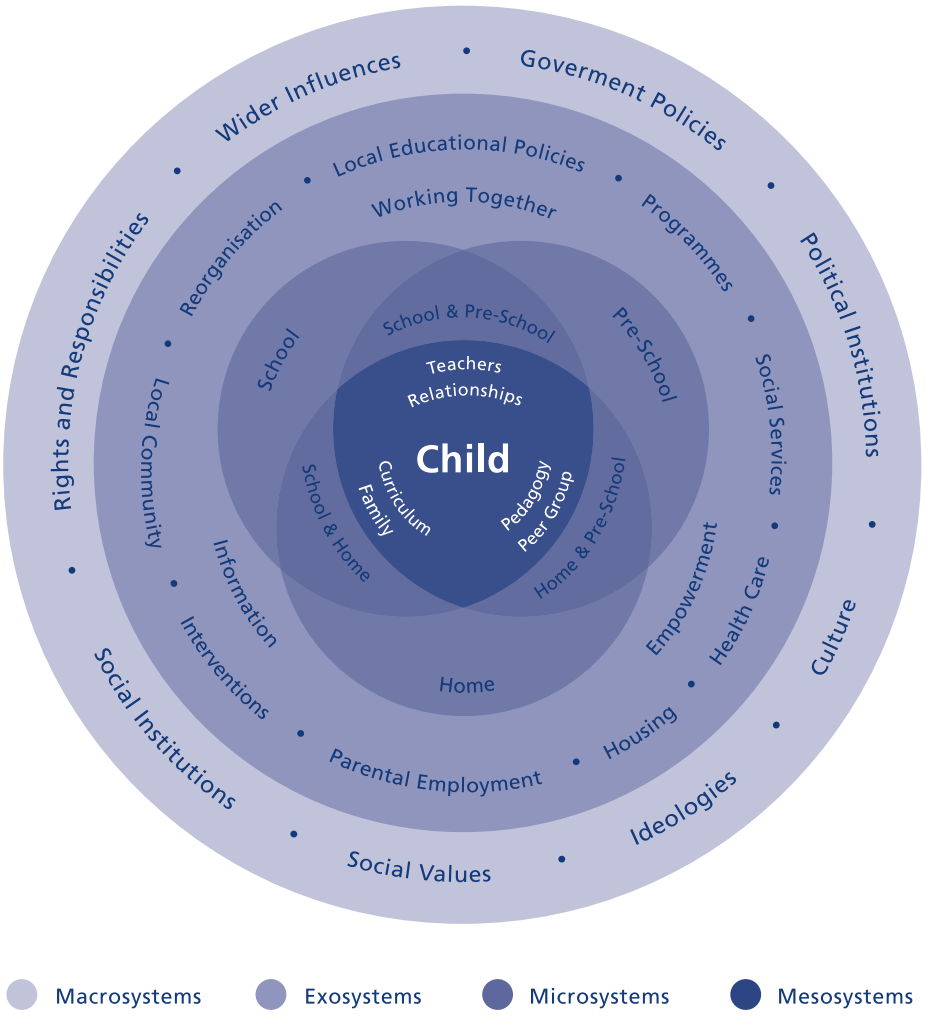

Diagram by A.W. Dunlop (2002), based on Bronfenbrenner's systems model

development occurs through strong mesosystem links. However, there are several ways to theorise early childhood transitions, including: seeing transition as a 'rite of passage' (van Gennep 1960) where a new uniform, lunch box and other paraphernalia marks the change to a new setting; as a 'border-crossing' (Campbell Clark 2000) where physically going between two domains or cultures marks a border between two worlds; and as 'rites of institution' institution' (Bourdieu, 1991) where it is necessary to transpose the 'symbolic capital' gained at home, to school. Other theoretical perspectives also offer insight into ideas about transition. These include 'life course theory', which places children and families in the context of the social structures, cultures and populations which affect them over time and place (Elder

2001); and 'critical life events' (Filipp 1995), which considers that the appraisal of the critical event itself is important and that it is the coping process that makes it a transition.

The above model adapted from Bronfenbrenner reflects the possible agency of children in the transition process. It attempts to show the importance of supporting the child's agency and thinking about human agency, which has the potential to highlight the possibilities for children, families and professionals to be agents of change, rather than subjects of transition factors outside their influence. Research that gains children's perspectives of transitions and develops children's agency is gaining increasing recognition (James et al. 1998; Qvortrup et al. 1994) as children develop their own solutions to socio-cultural well-being and curriculum understanding at transfer (Dockett and Perry 1999; Dunlop 2001). Consulting with children is increasingly seen to be part of each child's human rights (www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm) offers a new vision of the child as an individual and as a member of a family and community, with rights and responsibilities appropriate to his or her age and stage of development. Currently, educational transition is defined as the process of change of environment and set of relationships that children make from one setting or phase of education to another over time (Fabian and Dunlop 2002b). Transitions are characterised by phases of concentrated learning and accelerated development in a social context (Welzer 1993). Certainly changes of relationship, teaching style, environment, space, time, contexts for learning, and learning itself, combine during transition, making intense demands on children and families (Fabian and Dunlop 2005). Change can bring the excitement of new beginnings, the anticipation of meeting new people and making new friends, and the opportunity to learn new things. Indeed, Plowden identified the fact that "children, like adults, enjoy and are stimulated by novelty and change. The first day of school, the transfer to 'big school', are landmarks in the process of growing up. Even when children are apprehensive, they look forward to change..."(DES 1967, para 427). However, this element of apprehension about the unknown can cause confusion and anxiety, leaving an impression that may still affect behaviour many years later if it is not addressed. School priming activities (Corsaro and Molinari 2000) offer day-to-day nursery and home experiences that provide children with opportunities to learn about the next phase of education. The nature of these transition activities might allow children the chance to engage in activities in peer groups, with older and differently experienced children already in elementary education, or indeed with the various adults who populate their lives. Page (2000), on the other hand, suggests that allowing children to experience discontinuity is seen as part of the continuum of life and learning. If going through a transition is a learning skill in its own right, it is important that children build resilience to change but are also given support to help them to both mark and negotiate change.

Expansion of educational provision and childcare in the early years has led to an increase in the number of moves that young children experience, so by the time children enter statutory education they may have already attended a number of educational settings. Ensuring that each transition is successful is significant for children's emotional well-being and to their continuing cognitive achievements. Thus, transition may also be viewed as a support for early integration of groups from different backgrounds, thereby becoming a necessary element of inclusion. The majority of children will have a positive transition brought about by the support of their family, early childhood setting and school, but research (Curtis 1986; Cleave and Brown 1991; Dowling 1995; Kienig 1999) has raised concerns that starting school might cause anxiety that affects some children's emotional well-being and their long-term social adjustment, thereby hindering future learning (Cleave and Brown 1991; Dowling 1998; Kienig 1999). If children's emotional well-being is significant for continuity of learning, it is also likely that better provision for transitions will result in fewer difficulties in later schooling.

Parents' values, beliefs, and socio-economic status, as well as their own experience of education will affect how families live (Goodnow 2001) and the kinds of transitions which their children will experience (Fthenakis 1998), but transitions that include parents in the initial stages are likely to offer parental support into inducting them into the way in which their child will learn at school. Given the emphasis that is currently being placed by a number of governments upon parental programmes and continuity in the early years, successful transitions are clearly seen as being cost-effective, contributing to the retention rate at primary school and likely to reduce the need for later social and educational remediation. Therefore, the involvement of families in the transition to school is likely to be advantageous not only to the children's welfare but also to parenting skills and the wider economy.

Chapter 1: Research into early educational transitions

Traditionally, evidence of the impact of transitions in young children's lives as they enter school has drawn heavily on a westernised model of education in which young children and their families increasingly have rights of access to pre-school education and care. In a dominant culture of legislated-for education-for-all, there is a common language of early childhood education and care (Dahlberg et al. 1999) which is widely used and includes a vocabulary of promoting development, ensuring readiness to learn as well as readiness for school i.e., 'child-ready' schools (Broström 2002), and a focus on educational interventions and outcomes as markers of quality. The imposition of school into the lives of young children marks an artificial boundary, which demands that development has reached particular key markers. Not being ready to make the transition to school at a particular time can have detrimental effects on future learning and self-esteem. However, transitions need to take account not only of countries where there are tightly connected links between pre-school experiences and school education, but also to include countries where pre-school provision is only loosely coupled to, or indeed quite separate from, school education. At the same time we propose it is essential to be open to somewhat contradictory ideas, for example, on the one hand those of smoothing transitions to school and preparing children for change, and on the other arguing the importance of transition as a means of maintaining distinctive and appropriate education for younger children.

With an increase across the world of early years nursery education for all, there is not only increasing emphasis on the transition that occurs as children move into school, but also recognition that children are vulnerable at this point both emotionally and pedagogically. In schools, the educational philosophy, teaching style and structure of education often varies from the nursery experience. Recognising that children can find it difficult to cope with such changes, many schools have made efforts to smooth the entry to school by preparing both children and their families for the differences they will meet. Any lack of emotional well-being at transition can cause worry and stress, leading to aggression, fatigue or withdrawal, all of which have the potential to impair learning capacity (Featherstone 2004). Children can become disaffected, disorientated and inhibited (Fisher 1996), resulting in behavioural problems which impact on commitment, motivation and relationships (Kienig 2002). Changes in environment, resources, curriculum, institutional culture, pedagogical approaches and styles of classroom interaction, all carry a potential to have an impact on how children respond during the first major educational transition. Starting school means having to learn the social rules and values of the organisation as well as coming to terms with changes in identity, roles and relationships (Griebel and Niesel 2000). Furthermore, on entry to school children become a 'school pupil', with different expectations placed on them such as learning in different ways, concentrating for longer periods

and behaving in a more responsible manner by playing co-operatively.

Literature on the transition process strongly emphasises the point that early childhood programmes are most effective if they are part of a broader coherent framework, linking early child development initiatives to the child's home and to primary schooling (Lombardi 1992). Curriculum frameworks that bridge pre-school and primary education strengthen pedagogical continuity, thereby helping to maintain enthusiasm for learning and school attendance. Indeed, some countries are moving toward integrated initial training across the age span, so that teachers of all phases of the education system share a common theoretical base and understanding. Training about transitions, particularly for those teaching the first class in school, might help to highlight and resolve the issues, helping to make a positive start to school for all children. For example, understanding that concrete materials are not always available in early primary classes where the critical skills of language, literacy, numeracy and problem-solving require considerable use with concrete materials in order to process and ensure deeper understanding and comprehension. A highly divided day with very short periods and too many subjects that are presented in the abstract will work against many young learners (particularly those who are not confident, have not had pre-school experience, come to school with a different home language, and so on).

An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001) multi-country study looked at a range of policies and programmes related to early childhood provision and found that attention to children's transitions to school led to more policy focus on building bridges across levels including staff training, regulations, administrative departments and curricula. This notion of bridging the gaps is helpful and important but so too, is the concept of 'narrowing the gap' (Dunlop 2002a). Not a new idea, as in recent years research has begun to show that "the key to effective services for young children is less through bridging the gap between different types of programmes, and more through ensuring continuity in certain key elements that characterise all good early childhood programmes" (Lombardi 1992). The greater the gap between the culture of the school and the culture of the early years nursery setting or home, the greater challenge to the child and the greater the risk of not being able to comply with understanding the requests of the teacher. A study by Brooker (2002) outlines how children move from 'child in the family' to 'pupil in the school' and how the values of home and school often differ. These include differences in the way in which play at home and play at school is perceived according to family and cultural values, and may cause emotional difficulties for children. A number of research projects emphasise the importance of making strong connections between the differing cultures and traditions on either side of the early education divide (Broström 2000; Dahlberg and Taguchi 1994; Neuman 2000) and use the differences to underline the consequent importance the transition into school assumes.

Inclusion in the school or class

Using notions from temperament theory, children's response to starting pre-school has been discussed in terms of 'adjustment' to peers, adults, and the new environment (Margetts 1999a; 2000; Mobley and Pullis 1991). Taking a more social-psychological perspective, a report on the Transition from Home to Pre-school Project, one of the very first studies to look at early childhood transitions, looked at entry from home into early childhood settings as an experience of socialisation (Blatchford et al.1982). This study reported that, after an initial period when the new children appeared to lack the necessary information about "rules, rituals and power structure" (p.157), they rapidly learned to participate in high levels of social interaction. Similarly, in another study, within their first week of attendance at a pre-school, the behaviour of twelve 3- to 4-year olds studied became similar to that of the established group members (Feldbaum et al. 1980). Both studies therefore suggest that time for socialisation or 'enculturalisation' is a central element in children's integration into a new educational setting, and should be appropriately supported by adults, so that integration into the group is successfully achieved. The implication is that this is also a necessary element for the transition to primary school.

Resilience in early childhood

The term 'resilience' is used to describe a collection of qualities that support adaptation and the capacity for "normal development under difficult conditions" (Fonagy et al. 1994 pp. 231–257). There is a growing body of literature on the subject of resilience in early childhood that discusses why some children are more able to accommodate change than others, and the role schools can play in supporting children who, for a variety of reasons, may not cope well in transition. The concept of resilience has been reflected in the educational literature (Howard et al. 1999; Krovetz 1999) and applied to early childhood transitions (Griebel and Niesel 2001) with Fthenakis (1998, p.15) stating that "education should help children acquire competencies to be able to cope resiliently with all kinds of transitions throughout their lives". The resilience concept may help to explain why some children cope well with transitions, whilst others find them more difficult. Benard (1995, p.1) claims that there is a natural human competence and capacity for resilience through which the individual can develop social competence, problem-solving skills, a critical consciousness, autonomy and a sense of purpose. Factors of family, school or community which may influence outcomes and help children to cope with life-stressors, of which transition may be one, are believed to be caring relationships, high expectations and opportunities to take part (Benard 1995, p. 2). In terms of educational transitions the optimism engendered by a caring relationship with a teacher can promote a sense of self-worth (Kidder 1990) and support the development of self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy and optimism, which are all critical features of resilience.

Many children experience a considerable degree of autonomy in their infancy where

their experiences are often negotiated with adults. These children, though adept in many ways, can find the transition to school enormously difficult because they move out of this environment of autonomy into one of conformity, lack of choice and paucity of explanation (Fortune-Wood 2002). It is difficult for children to envisage what school is like before it has been experienced. Those with older siblings or those who play with school-aged children may have acquired some understanding of school values and systems vicariously. Within role-play they may have developed 'script knowledge' (Gura 1996, p.37) while they were exploring make-believe school with those who have already had experience of school. However, for the first child in a family and for many others, school will be a completely new experience. In presenting their picture of school, parents, siblings and friends shape children's thinking but on arriving at school the reality may be different as children may experience discontinuities in the way in which they are expected to learn and behave (Stephen and Brown 2002). While the reality of school can be different from expectations it can also be exciting and challenging in a positive way.

A number of studies (Ladd and Price 1987; Margetts 1999b; Peters 1999) highlight factors that are important in facilitating the transition to school and are critical for school success (Love et al. 1992) and where settling well in their first year at school "sets them up for later" (Laurent 2000). Research points to "the critical need for attending to children's early years and to providing them with a healthy start that readies them for school and later life" (Kagan and Neuman 1998). If children are to make sense of school with its institutional ways, bewildering new vocabulary and strange culture, most will need support and the opportunity to talk through what school means to them (Fabian 2002). Home and school can work together to achieve this by collaborating to provide children with positive experiences as they are initiated into school, and building good memories of this particular 'rite of passage' (Kessler 1999), so that they are indeed set up for later.

Chapter 2: The roles of key actors in the process of transition

This first major educational transition can be viewed as an opportunity for families and the education system to work together to build children's dispositions to engage with change, whilst sustaining their capacities to learn. The contribution of parents in that process (Griebel and Niesel 2002; Johansson 2002) such as parents' values, beliefs, and socio-economic status, as well as their own experience of education will affect the way the transition is experienced. Perry et al.'s 1998 investigation of parents, children's and teachers' views of transition to school included a content analysis that revealed five major categories of response: knowledge, adjustment, skill, disposition and rules. Comments were analysed in terms of frequency with teachers and parents focusing more on the category of 'adjustment' than any other, whilst children focussed on 'rules'. For the adults 'disposition', 'knowledge' and 'skill' followed 'adjustment' in order of importance.

Children's perspectives

A child's perspective approach to studying entry into school is relatively recent and is illustrated in the work of Ingrid Pramling-Samuelsson and Marita Lindahl (1991; 1994) in Sweden, Sven Thyssen (2000) in Denmark, Wilfried Griebel and Renate Niesel (2000) in Germany, Hilary Fabian in England (2002), Aline-Wendy Dunlop in Scotland (2001; 2002b; 2005a; 2005b) and Sue Dockett and Bob Perry (2001a; 2001b) in Australia. Their studies seek information from all the players on how children experience day-to-day transitions. The approaches used in interviewing children are carefully thought through, and often visual material is used to help children understand and be effective in sharing what they think and know. Children's first-hand accounts often produce surprises and this has implications for the adult capacity to listen and to hear what it is that children are saying.

Children react differently to change and new experiences. Asking children allows adults to develop children's own ideas and support them to bridge the nursery and elementary experiences. Such discussion reveals that children may feel acutely embarrassed by their lack of knowledge, or difficulty in finding their way around a new place, but also that they like their current abilities to be recognised (Dunlop 2001).

Children enter the institutional world with already developing concepts of themselves (Donaldson 1978), and by the time they start nursery education are thinkers and language users. They learn at this stage to negotiate their desires and requests and to collaborate in the educators' agenda. As they enter elementary education they have to learn to adjust to a much more adult-directed world in which decisions are made about what and when they will learn. Used to adapting skills to "the immediate and compelling" (Donaldson 1978, p.121), in

situations which are embedded in the context, children are then expected to be able to apply their thinking to the abstract, or to unfamiliar situations such as dealing with representations of the world (in words and numbers, pictures and diagrams). Despite children coming to school able to think and reason about the world, events, people, language and number and with a desire to learn, this can make school difficult. Success in school however depends on this ability and requires the adult to be able to decentre in order to see things from the child's point of view.

Educators' perspectives

Numbers of research projects emphasise the importance of making strong connections between the differing cultures and traditions on either side of the early education divide (Broström 2000; Dahlberg and Taguchi 1994; Neuman 2000) and use these differences to underline the consequent importance the transition into school assumes. The greater the gap between the culture of the school and the culture of the early years' nursery setting or home, the greater challenge to the child and the greater the risk of not being able to comply with understanding to the requests of the teacher (Dunlop 2002c). Teachers in a study by Fabian (2002) reported that children being ready for school involves: the ability to be part of a large group competing for the attention of one adult; the capacity to concentrate; to be self-sufficient; use their initiative and sit for long periods of time – none of which are expected in the pre-school environment.

Margetts, (2000) notes that transition programmes should be based on a philosophy that children's adjustment to school is easier when children are familiar with the situation, parents are informed about the new school and teachers have information about children's development and previous experiences. Certain continuities should be aimed for, such as continuity of peers, of expectations between settings (including teacher and child behaviours), of programming for children's learning. By contrast, Corsaro and Molinari (2000) consider that many 'school-priming' events are embedded in the pre-school experience.

In a survey which asked teachers to reflect on and judge a number of transition activities, educators were asked to rate a range of transition activities in order to judge which they most valued, and to express any possible barriers. Whilst many of the responses were positive, a contradiction between 'meeting to discuss educational ideas' and 'co-ordinating education practice' emerges, as the latter may be seen as 'too binding' (Broström 2000, p.14). Here lies a possible barrier to successful school transition, as educators, whilst enjoying the opportunity to meet and talk, may use the same language to describe rather different concepts but may not share the same understanding of the meanings.

Parental transitions as their children start school

Typically, early years transition research has focussed on the child's experience, and on

how such experience is viewed by various stakeholders in the educational process. There is much less research detailing the transition process from the perspectives of parents and families. This is despite the strong recognition within the educational community and in policy statements that family engagement with schools facilitates educational success. Recent work from Scotland (Dunlop 2005c) and Australia (Dockett and Perry 2005) focuses on the parental experience as parents anticipate, and then experience, their child's transition from prior to school, to school settings. Data sources include parental values (Schaefer and Edgerton 1985), discussion group transcripts, parental diaries, photographs and drawings. Findings include the nature of the school environment, the age of starting school, whether there are gender differences in learning, the nature of preparation for school and expectations of school. In both Scotland and Australia results are based upon data from ongoing group discussions with a small number of families. The families live in the Stirling Council area in Scotland, and in suburban Sydney, Australia. In Scotland perhaps the strongest feelings are concerned with knowing what goes on in their child's life at school, when one parent said, "I'd like to be a fly on the wall", everyone agreed. In Australia, all families involved had children attending a childcare centre and all were involved in planning for the transition to school. Informal discussions led by a researcher occurred over the year preceding the children's move to school and into the children's first year of school. Issues raised by families, such as the appropriate age for children to start school, potential parental roles at school, deciding on which school children would attend and expectations of school, featured highly in these discussions. Similarities and differences in the issues and expectations of families in Scotland and the Australian group were explored and much common ground arose.

Associated transition approaches

The related case of a 'family transition approach' (Fthenakis 1998), stresses the view that transitions bring discontinuities where perhaps we have in the past assumed a focus on continuity would prevail, with less attention being paid to the concept of discontinuity, especially the concept of transition-related discontinuities. Fthenakis (1998) points out that transitions have in the past, been defined by such external features as the child's age, the timing of transition into new settings or a geographical move. His work draws attention to the need to take account of the psychological aspects of transition for the child and those around the child as well as traditionally recognised influences. On this view, transition to school becomes a family transition, and not just the child's. Effective transition approaches therefore need to take families into account.

Insights can also be gained from other types of transition studies, for example, family empowerment in transitioning (Davey et al. 1998), the transition to parenthood (Cowan and Cowan (2000), the coping strategies of children and adults in the transitions caused by divorce (Fthenakis 1998), work-family border theory

(Campbell Clark 2000), transitions as rites of passage (van Gennep 1960), transitions without school (Fortune-Wood 2002) and the lack of progress and variations in teaching approach at the elementary–secondary transition (Galton et al. 2000). All these help to put the case of nursery–elementary transition in context, and to emphasise the importance of supporting successful early educational transitions as a contribution to life-long strategies for meeting and dealing with change in ways that are positively beneficial.

Chapter 3: Examples of successful initiatives

Several examples have been cited throughout this paper that explore the expectations of children, parents and practitioners at the start of school. This section, however, details some successful initiatives that have enhanced the educational transition experience of young children.

A study in **Scotland** (Dunlop 2002c) identified themes that supported children in their transition. The theme of *Links and Continuity* provides an example where staff work together to plan for children from a nursery to visit their new school and the primary children return to visit the nursery. One of the aims was to build on the independence children achieve in nursery and to sustain this in primary through making opportunities for children to start school confidently and with teachers who have already had the chance to get to know each child. The new entrants were invited to school on four successive weekly visits and were involved in different types of activities alongside the primary school children. This *Apprenticeship Model* gives opportunities to make links as well as to build confidence and familiarity.

The theme of *Progression in Learning* (Dunlop 2002c) shows how a nursery and a school developed a shared transition theme called *Once Upon a Time*. Nursery children joined in a range of learning opportunities associated with the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. The idea of growth and change was introduced in a variety of ways and discussions about growing up and changing to primary school took place. Children borrowed story sacks, linked to this theme, to enjoy at home. Further linked activities were offered on a day when parents and children visited school. Children who were entering three classes the following term had a common experience that day which allowed them to talk with each other and develop a shared idea of what school was like. When the children started school the corridor linking the nursery class and school had a beanstalk decorated with children's photographs leading to the new classes. The topic continued in the first primary class and acted as a learning bridge from one situation to the next. Corsaro (1996) identified continuing the learning process by involving children in anticipated changes in their lives as a 'priming event'.

Studies from **Germany** by Griebel and Niesel (2000; 2001; 2002; 2006) indicate that the start of school for children is a transition in which there is a change of identity within each family. While parents and teachers both offer children support during the transition to school, they may have different expectations of the process, which are communicated to the children both verbally and non-verbally. In order to clarify expectations, parents and teacher can prepare children for school by 'co-constructing' the transition. This comes about through conversations about learning at school, and about what happens at school and in the family to prepare children to cope with aspects of school and negotiate their

identity. Communication is clearly one key to a successful transition. In a co-constructive approach, the participants try to clarify how the processes of learning in different settings (home, kindergarten and school) can be interconnected and thus optimised, following the principle that a child's knowledge and expertise should not be devalued at the beginning of formal schooling but further developed.

In **Denmark** a case study by Broström (2002) outlines the importance of 'child-ready schools' whereby schools work closely with their 'feeder' nurseries to develop curriculum continuity to meet the child's needs. Through meetings between nursery and school staff during which the nursery provides photographs, drawings, favourite stories and so on, teachers gain an insight into the interests of individual children and can plan transition activities accordingly. He also identifies that dispositions about school are often associated with friends. This highlights the importance of making the transition with friends as this provides emotional well-being and confidence for children to approach new challenges.

In **Australia**, Dockett and Perry (2001a) have developed *Guidelines for Effective Transition to School* programmes. One aspect in the background to this identifies that generally children who experience similar environments and expectations at home and at school are likely to find the transition to school, as well as school itself, easier. The converse also holds in that children who find school unfamiliar and unrelated to their home contexts tend to experience difficulty, confusion and anxiety during the transition, particularly when the cultures of the home and school also differ.

In **Botswana**, Le Roux (2002) noted that the San children were dropping out of school early due to the difficulties of adjusting to conflicting values and expectations between their tribe and the school. She found that children who attended pre-school were generally those children who progressed to primary school and were subsequently less likely to drop out of the system. Le Roux identified the importance of staff gaining a 'socio-cultural understanding' of minority cultures, the need to avoid rivalry between pre-school and school, to respect communities as a valuable resource and to explain the aims and advantages of early learning programmes to both parents and primary schools.

The following case studies have been adapted from the background paper commissioned for the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007. Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education:* "Is everybody ready? Readiness, transition and continuity: lessons, reflections and moving forward" by Caroline Arnold, Kathy Bartlett, Saima Gowani and Rehana Merali (2006).

Sweden has carefully designed education policies and political and financial support to enable primary schools to be more responsive to children's individual learning needs, in many ways mimicking pre-school learning pedagogies. "The Swedish experience shows that this link

has potential to galvanise a country's efforts to make schools more learner-centred, to bring a paradigm shift in education, in which *care, development,* and *learning* will no longer be foreign concepts alongside *education*" (UNESCO 2002).

In the **USA,** the *Child–Parent Center Program* was part of the Chicago Public School system and often housed at the local primary school. The pre-school and primary school components worked in sync with each other and ensured a high level of learning continuity for child and family. The pre-school programme was able to wield more influence on the primary school system, resulting in smaller primary school classrooms, additional resource teachers and low student: teacher ratios. Parental involvement was central, with parents dedicating at least half a day a week in the child's classroom. Results included high levels of educational attainment, low rates of repetition and low levels of delinquency (Promising Practices Network 2003).

In **Canada** a similar type of integration between pre-school and local primary school, which involved parents was a key recommendation of the final report of the *Early Years Study to the Government of Ontario* (McCain and Mustard 1999).

In **Nepal**, a Save the Children-supported transition programme introduced children during their last few months in early childhood centres to some of the activities and skills that would be emphasised once they entered school. The programme also arranged visits to the school and ensured the Grade 1 teacher visited children in the centre. The primary school interventions included working with the whole school to develop a commitment to children's rights. This involved particular emphasis on providing a welcoming and non-punitive atmosphere for all children, especially girls and *dalits* (lower-caste, or peasant children), and, while general teacher training in child-friendly, active-learning approaches was provided to all teachers, particular attention was given to those working in the first two grades. For the latter, focus was on ensuring a maximum 50:1 child:teacher ratio in Grade 1. Grade 1 textbooks were used as the basis for creating a hands-on practical teacher-training package that helped teachers to put active learning into practice. Ensuring that the activities with children were recognised by teachers as helping children learn skills and concepts in the textbooks was seen as critical in getting the buy-in of teachers who had had little in the way of education or professional development support. Low cost/ no cost learning materials kits were also provided. Results included a significant improvement in school attendance, pass rates and promotion and a corresponding reduction in dropout and repetition (Bartlett et al. 2004;). Similarly, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded pre-school education *Early Learning for School Success* programme (SUCCEED) in **Bangladesh** in association with Save the Children–USA focuses specifically on creating a culturally sensitive, affordable model of linked community-based pre-school and early primary education to support the learning of 5–9-year olds.

In **Jamaica**, the pilot *Pre-Primary to Primary Transitions Programme* begun in 2001 with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to the Government's *Basic Education and Early Childhood Education and Development* (BEECD) programme is another emerging example that is linking pre- and primary schools as well as tracking children (ages 4–8) moving between them. The objectives are to improve the quality of teaching and learning in pre-schools and Grades 1 and 2, as well as coordination between the levels; increase parental support for children's learning; and improve attendance and enrolment. The pilot deliberately focuses on literacy through an integrated curriculum (e.g., science activities are incorporated into literacy ones). In-service workshops are attended jointly by both levels of teachers and include modelling for promoting early literacy using a combination of approaches appropriate for young learners. Workshops on supporting early literacy in the home are provided to parents. Early results suggest differential impact on children due to differences of ability, developmental levels and attendance. This reinforces the importance of looking specifically at what happens during the transition period when children's literacy foundations are being formed.

In **India**, *Bodh Shiksha Samiti* is a Rajasthan non-governmental organisation (NGO) pioneering innovative approaches in education for the most disadvantaged in urban slums and rural areas. They work through their own *bodhshalas* (*Bodh's* urban non-formal schools, now viewed as a model for replication elsewhere in urban slum areas of Jaipur) and also through government schools. Classrooms include plenty of low-cost/no-cost learning materials, there is intensive peer support amongst teachers who undertake continuous assessment of all students – across academic subjects, the arts and social interactions. A strict notion of grades is replaced by having three broad clusters or levels amongst which children, aged from 3 to 16 or so, progress. The impact of *Bodh's* approach continues to be documented (Gowani and Tiwari 2006) and is particularly strong for girls and other marginalised students. The *bodhshalas* offer a remarkable seamless integration for students from pre-school into primary (Govinda 2006). *Bodh*-supported primary schools have had four times fewer dropouts than non-intervention schools in Rajasthan (AKF EMIS 2004).

The *Madrasa Community-Based Early Childhood Programme,* has worked with support from the Madrasa Resource Centre (MRC) for more than 15 years in **Kenya, Zanzibar** and **Uganda** in response to families' desire to give their children a good start – enabling them to succeed in school, while at the same time, reaffirming local cultural and religious values and knowledge. The community-owned pre-schools offer children (Muslim and non-Muslim girls and boys) a rich learning environment full of locally made manipulatives, active learning and supportive adults. Early on, MRC staff received reports from their pre-school teachers, parents and children that when children enrolled in Grade 1 they experienced a serious 'jolt' with the change in learning environment. The MRCs began to organise annual open

days and workshops for Grade 1 teachers and head teachers from the schools into which the pre-schools feed. During these sessions, MRC staff had access to displays of, and hands-on experience with, many of the *Madrasa* pre-schools' learning materials. This proved effective in engaging their primary colleagues in discussion on active learning principles – key for those who view activities in pre-schools as 'only play'. Requests now regularly come from the early primary teachers for training and support in developing their own teaching and learning materials. Including the head teachers has been critical – as has the *Madrasa* pre-school teachers visiting their local primary schools. MRCs are looking to expand their efforts in the area of transition through sharing effective practices and advocacy with their government colleagues across the three countries.

In **Guyana** the *Transition from Nursery to Primary School* (Rodrigues 2000) research project, founded in 1985, brought nursery school teachers, Grade 1 teachers and parents together to discuss the problems that students faced when transitioning between the two levels. The usual disconnects between early childhood centres and the formal system had resulted in many children leaving Grade 1. The initiative led to both groups of teachers agreeing on goals for children. These included basic skill and cognitive development, socialisation for respect, national consciousness and the extension of learning outside the classroom. Pairs of teachers (one primary and one nursery) began to work together, resulting in home visits; working in smaller groups and establishing 'corners' for learning etc. Grade 1 teachers found themselves modifying their classroom activities to be more suitable to the learning styles of younger children.

The *Releasing Confidence and Creativity Programme* (RCC) supported by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and USAID in **Pakistan**, works in poor rural communities in Sindh and Balochistan. Initial discussions focussed on addressing issues at primary school level as a whole. However, high early dropout and repetition rates, as well as the government's formalising of the *katchi* classrooms (which cater to pre-school age children within primary schools) within the primary school system, led AKF and implementing partners to re-think. The RCC partners undertook the following: awareness raising of the early childhood period; working with communities to identify local women to train as *katchi* and lower primary teachers; establishing *katchi* classes; provision of a '*katchi* kit of activities' developed by a local NGO partner (the Teachers' Resource Centre); and encouraging parent and community involvement in the local school (e.g., as resources to teach local songs, read stories and demonstrate specific skills or assist with construction etc). The *katchi* classes within the government schools in the programme are now the beacons within the schools – a hub of colour and enthusiastic activity. As children enter higher grades, parents continue to expect that they will be taught in an engaging learning environment and, recognising children's increased engagement and learning, teachers from higher classes are interested in the methods introduced in the *katchi* classes.

In **Cambodia** a UNICEF-supported *School Readiness Programme* (SRP) introduced a readiness course in the first two months of a child's formal education, in order to compensate for the lack of formal pre-schooling and generally poor early childhood development experiences in that country (UNICEF 2004). The SRP resulted in improved learning (measured by a standardised testing instrument) and had a major impact on facilitating learning among repeaters. Follow-up to examine impact on learning achievement in core curricula (language and mathematics) at the end of Grade 1 found significant impact in 22 out of 25 areas. Differences were particularly marked in topic areas relating to Khmer language and reading skills. A similar programme introduced into **the Philippines** some years ago has now been abandoned in favour of making the whole of Grade 1 a more child-friendly learning experience.

In **Mali**, where early childhood provision is almost non-existent, a *Pedagogie Convergente* is being introduced. For the first years of schooling, teaching is in the local language. French is introduced slowly as a foreign language, bringing pupils to nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. Initial results during the pilot phase showed that after a year of programme implementation, the children were able to do things – read with understanding and apply calculations beyond simple memorisation – which many Year 3 pupils had not been able to do. Use of local language was seen as the critical factor. According to DFID (1999), "[c]hildren understand what they are learning, therefore they can learn".

Escuela Nueva, has been operating since the 1970s as a system of community schools in rural **Columbia**. By the 1990s it had expanded to 18,000 schools, increasing primary school participation by around 60% (Rugh and Bossert 1998). The active curriculum encourages children to participate in their learning. In multi-grade classrooms, teachers are trained to work with students using participatory methods and to plan lessons responding to students' different abilities and interests. Parent and community involvement are central and participation in adult education, agricultural extension, athletic competition, health campaigns and community celebrations are much higher in *Escuela Nueva* schools than in neighbouring government schools (Psacharopoulous et al. 1993). Compared to students in traditional rural schools, students from *Escuela Nueva* scored considerably higher in tests on socio-civic behaviour, Grade 3 mathematics, and Grade 3/4 Spanish. Children in *Escuela Nueva* schools were also found to be more confident than their counterparts in government schools and the self-esteem of primary school girls paralleled that of boys, a testament to the holistic, child-centred philosophy used in *Escuela Nueva. Escuela Nueva* is interesting because it does not specifically target lower grades. However, because of the welcoming atmosphere, informal structure, self-paced curriculum and flexible time schedules, lower primary children have the inclination to continue with their education, while their counterparts in traditional schools are dropping out from Grades 1 and 2 in droves.

The *Step by Step Transition–Primary School Programme* implemented across nearly 30 **Central Eastern European and Commonwealth of Independent States** countries establishes an intentional connection and overlap in teaching and learning styles between two normally distinct levels. Where possible, *Step by Step* transitions children together from pre-school into the same primary classrooms. In pre-school, children participate in such role activities as 'Play 1st Grade'. Conversely, children from Grade 1 are invited to the pre-school to talk about their experiences. Parents and community are also actively involved in the transition between pre-school and Grade 1. Collectively, pre-school teachers and parents review the primary school curriculum and discuss children to make sure they have the necessary skills for Grade1. Additionally, the primary school teachers are trained in the same pedagogic framework as the pre-school. The teachers use the same seven core modules (individualisation, learning environment, family participation, teaching strategies for meaningful learning, planning and assessment, professional development and social inclusion), and are expected to demonstrate identical competencies, but through different observable examples. The *Step by Step* curriculum is organised based on age, not grade, since primary school entrance age varies between locations/countries. Non-graded classrooms for the first four years (ages 7–10) of primary education ensure continuity of teaching and learning. Teachers use materials with children in a meaningful way and students thus develop strong foundations in their knowledge of the subjects taught.

Chapter 4: Identification of lessons learned from the analysis

In analysing a number of transition studies, including those described earlier, some key factors are highlighted as important in the transition to school. These include social competencies, transferring with friends and being supported to make friends (Ladd 1990); planning a range of transition activities (Margetts 1999a; 1999b; 2000; 2002); communication between the pre-school setting, school and family before the child enters school that has been found to foster effective transition to school (Pianta and Kraft-Sayre 2003; Fabian 2002); being aware of the importance of developing effective approaches to learning in nursery school, building on children's prior learning, and the importance of informal activity settings for children who are less strategic in their learning (Cullen 1992). In addition, there are factors such as a positive attitude about school and to learning (Entwisle and Alexander 1998), as well as factors on an inter-actional level such as parents' positive attitude towards school and learning, and a positive child–teacher relationship (Pianta, Cox, Taylor and Early, D., 1999) Griebel and Niesel (2006) identify that for socially disadvantaged children a high-quality pre-school programme is especially important. Where there are ethnic/lingual minorities, is has been proved that fit between the cultural background of children and the capacity of schools to meet diversity is important for the transition to school (Yeboah 2002).

In the ecological model put forward by Bronfenbrenner (1979), children's development is viewed as being influenced by their direct and indirect experiences of particular contexts within a broader socio-cultural setting. Thus, children's transition to school and their ability to continue learning is influenced by a variety of personal and family characteristics, societal and family trends and contextual and life experiences. However, concepts of childhood itself are not constant but are embedded in social, political and economic understandings, which may affect the influences on the transition process. What is seen from the analysis is that there are certain aspects that currently make a positive contribution to the transitions process. These are identified here under two key areas that are linked to the socio-emotional well-being of children – the 'settling in' to school – and their intellectual progression; and a third area that is concerned with communication.

Activities that support learning across the transition

One way to bring about a successful start for all children is to manage the transition process from early childhood services to school in a proactive way that creates a stress-free bridge from one setting to another and develops understanding about the ways of learning in school. In planning effective transition

programmes, children's adjustment to a new environment can be supported through various transitional activities that create links between, and actively involve, children, parents, families, teachers, early childhood services, schools and the local community. This can include discussion and experience of activities such as visits prior to starting (with other children who will be starting at the same time), in order to learn about ways of learning at school, as well as familiarisation with the environment and people (Margetts 2002); developing children's thinking about the difference between philosophical learning boundaries – from play to formal learning – that anticipate change, in order to embrace change confidently and to enjoy what the new setting offers (Broström, 2007); using play-based activities that start in one setting and are completed in the next (Fabian and Dunlop 2005); using social stories that provide an insight into the next place of learning (Briody and McGarry 2005); mentoring by children already at the new setting to demonstrate ways of learning; and staff becoming familiar with the children's background and learning prior to the commencement of transition.

Supporting socio-emotional well-being during the transition

A lack of emotional well-being limits the ability to build relationships and become active participants in life and learning (Roffey and O'Reirdan 2001; Porter 2003). Emotional stability, positive attitudes and the ability to communicate effectively are seen as essential foundations for learning (QCA 2000) because secure and happy children are able to fully participate in, and engage with, the educational challenges confronting them (Burrell and Bubb 2000). In short, emotional well-being empowers children as learners. By ensuring that aspects of the learning environment and the routine of the day are familiar, children are likely to become confident and have a sense of control over their lives. In addition, Winnicott (1974) suggests that bringing a transitional object – a special toy – to school comforts and links the child with other people, especially parents and family, when they are apart.

Children expect to do well at school but in order to cope successfully they have to acquire a range of specific school language and social knowledge such as the expected ways of behaving, getting along with others, waiting their turn, sharing, expressing their needs and being able to ask for help. Knowing the rules and knowing what to do is important for children (Perry et al. 2000), so teaching the rules will help them to function well.

Children are less likely to learn well and profit from school without the support of friends. Margetts (2002, p.112) found that children who started school with a familiar playmate in the same class "had higher levels of social skills and academic competence and less problem behaviours than other children". Moving with friends gave them the emotional foundations to gain confidence for learning.

A sense of belonging to the school community is an important contributor to how well children and families adjust (Dockett and Perry

2005). This comes about partly through the relationships between and among children, families and staff, but also through developing an identity and making the culture meaningful to individuals by having systems for bringing the child's culture to the setting.

Acquiring skills such as being able to anticipate change, adapt their learning styles, understand in less-familiar situations and develop conceptions of themselves as learners in the school situation are all part of making sense of school. Some children have developed this 'emotional literacy' (Goleman 1998) and are able to cope with change, while others struggle. Those children who are successful have developed social competence, resiliency and agency that will enable them to, 'read' the teacher, make meaning of the nature of school and to deal with new situations. In other words, they are able to function at school and have expectations about learning. Empowering children through teaching and learning approaches that support their developing social competence and problem-solving skills is likely to enable them to maximise their learning and succeed at school. It could be argued that if this is so for the transition to primary education, then this is also the case at the start of the pre-school experience.

Communication

In addition to the above, it is important to demystify school for parents and to make school accessible. Starting school is a co-construction (Griebel and Niesel 2002) whereby children starting primary education are supported by parents, pre-school and school staff in a purposeful way; sharing views of children as learners and planning jointly for a transition curriculum which bridges curriculum phases and increases the agency of the child. This may start with home visits or by sharing information about the child's prior learning. Parents generally wish to receive information about the school, the curriculum, admission procedures, arrival and departure systems and so on. Having this knowledge and understanding about school boosts parental confidence, which can, in turn, boost their child's confidence. However, the amount of information can be confusing and at times hinder the transition process. If there is too much information, if it is given very rapidly or the terminology used is unfamiliar then this might alienate parents. Information that is accessible both in quality and quantity is more likely to help parents in their understanding, give them confidence and reduce stress. If there is insufficient information or misunderstanding it might lead to parents' anxiety and, in turn, affect their child's ability to settle (Fabian 2002). The transition to school is likely to be improved, therefore, by the appropriate quantity and content of information flow to parents and their children.

Implications for policy planning and implementation in meeting the Education for All (EFA) Goal 1

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

When planning for transitions there are a number of possible elements to consider that are likely to have an impact on children and their families. A key one is integrating services. Many countries have recognised the importance of integrating education, social welfare and health services in order to meet the wide-ranging needs of children and families. Communication between the various bodies is as important here as the communication between parents, pre-school and school, if each is to understand the other's position.

The age of starting school is often linked to a specific phase of education and curriculum, yet the method of teaching often changes between phases, and this can cause pedagogical confusion for children. Starting school usually means coping with unfamiliar frames of reference, a different cultural model from that at home or in the previous setting, and learning the social rules and values of the organisation. However, in many countries there is a difference between rural and urban schools, sometimes in size and sometimes in organisation that can result in different ways of grouping children or in different bridging programmes between phases.

Early childhood can be seen as a tool in which governments invest for their national futures because the benefits of early education are good for the economy (www.ifs.org.uk, accessed 09.12.2005). By ensuring socio-emotional well-being during the transition process to school, learning is likely to progress. In order to achieve this, policy planners need to embrace the idea of co-construction of transition which is shared by all the participants; teachers, parents and children in the context of their own particular community, where the transitional territory between pre-school and school is one in which families have a part and can be social actors and agents in the transition process, but also where children are seen as developing, becoming pupils and moving on to the next stage and are therefore supported through rites of passage (van Gennep 1960). To achieve this, the following suggestions for schools might help with planning:

- schools having a named person, or a small team, to take responsibility and a strategic overview of the process;
- schools providing pre-entry visits for children and their parents that involve parents and children learning about learning at school as well as familiarisation with the environment and people;
- schools having systems that allow for high-quality communication and close interaction between family, pre-transfer settings and school, where information is both given and received about children's experiences;
- schools being sensitive to the needs of individuals and particular groups and having strategies in place to support them;
- flexible admission procedures that give children and their parents the opportunity to have a positive start to their first day;
- children starting school with a friend and schools having systems in place to help children make friends (repeating a year can cause friendship problems at the next transition);

- schools having strategies to help children develop resilience to cope with change and to be active in making the transition work for them;
- curriculum continuity across phases of education, that results from establishing the prior learning that has taken place and where children are helped to learn with and from each other; 'looping' where pre-school and school staff plan together and work alternate years in each phase;
- schools evaluating induction and the management of transitions and transfers from the perspective of all participants, and that help to question the assumptions of the setting and see life from the child's perspective;
- special training for staff working with those children who are starting school.

These suggestions need to take into account not only countries where there are tightly connected links between pre-school experience and primary education, but also countries where pre-school provision is only loosely coupled or quite separated from primary education. However, it is also essential to be open to somewhat contradictory ideas such as, on the one hand, those of smoothing transitions to school and preparing children for change, and on the other hand, arguing the importance of transition as a means of maintaining distinctive and appropriate education for younger children. In exploring transitions in this way, new issues and challenges arise for example: Does the age of transition to school matter? To what extent does the very vocabulary of transition suggest negative experiences? Is resilience gained through difficult experiences?

References

Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Electronic Materials Information Service (EMIS) (2004) EMIS Report of PESLE Partners. New Delhi, Aga Khan Foundation.

Arnold, C., Bartlett, K., Gowani S.and Merali, R. (2006). 'Is everybody ready? Readiness, transition and continuity: lessons, reflections and moving forward'. *Paper commissioned for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007 Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education:*

Bartlett, S., Pradhanang, U.l. Sapkota, P. and Thapa, N. (2004) *Everyone Counts: Dalit Children and the Right to Education in Nepal.* Nepal, Save the Children US.

Benard, B. (1995) *Fostering Resilience in Children. Illinois,* USA: ERIC) Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. EDO-PS-95-9.

Bernstein, B. (1990) *Class, codes and control,* vol. 4: the structuring of pedagogic discourse. London, Routledge.

Blatchford, P., Battle, S. and Mays, J. (1982). *The First Transition. Home to pre-school.* Windsor, UK: National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

Bourdieu, P. 1991. Language and symbolic power. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Briody, J. and McGarry, K. (2005) *Using Social Stories to Ease Children's Transitions* www.journal.naeyc.org/btj/200509/BriodyBTJ905.pdf accessed on 15.12.05.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design.* Massachusetts, USA: Harvard University Press.

Brooker, L. (2002) *Starting School: Young Children Learning Cultures.* Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Broström, S. (2000). Transition to school. Paper related to poster symposium at the 10th European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) International Conference: London, UK. September 2000.

Broström, S. (2002). Communication and continuity in the transition form kindergarten to school. In: Fabian, H. and Dunlop A-W. A. *Transitions in the Early Years: Debating continuity and progression for children in early education.* London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Broström, S (2007) Transitions in children's thinking in A.W. Dunlop and H. Fabian *Informing Transitions in the Early Years: Research, Policy and Practice.* Berkshire: McGraw Hill Education / Open University Press.

Burrell, A. and Bubb, S. (2000). Teacher feedback in the reception class: associations with children's positive adjustment to school', *Education 3–13* 28(3): 58–69.

Campbell Clark, S. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance, *Human Relations* 53(6): 747–770.

Cleave, S. and Brown, S. (1991) *Early To School: Four-Year-Olds in Infant Classes.* London, UK: National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)/Routledge.

Corsaro, W. A. (1996) Transitions in early childhood: the promise of comparative longitudinal ethnography. In: Jessor, R., Colby A. and Shweder, R. A. (eds), *Ethnography and Human Development.* Chicago, USA: University of Chicago Press.

Corsaro, W. A. and Molinari, L. (2000). Priming events and Italian children's transition from pre-school to elementary school: representations and action. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63(1): 16–33.

Cowan, C. P. and Cowan, P.A. (2000) *When Partners Become Parents: The big life change for couples.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Cullen, J. (1992). Young children's learning strategies: continuities and discontinuities. *International Journal of Early Childhood* 23(1): 44–58.

Curtis, A. M. (1986). *A Curriculum for the Pre-school Child.* London, UK: National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)/Nelson.

Dahlberg, G. and Talguchi, H. L. (1994). Pre-school and school: two different traditions and the vision of a meeting place. Special print from Appendix 3 to the report *Grunden för livslångt lärande. Enbarnmogen skola (The Foundations for Lifelong Learning. A Child- Ready School)* Stockholm: Fritze; Statens Offentliga Utredningar.

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P. and Pence, A. (1999). *Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care: Postmodern Perspectives.* London, UK: Falmer.

Davey Zeece, P. and Wang, A. (1998). Effects of the family empowerment and transitioning program on child and family outcomes. *Child Study Journal* 28(3): 161–178.

Department of Education and Science (DES). (1967). *Children and Their Primary Schools.* A Report by the Central Advisory Council for Education, chaired by Lady Plowden. London, UK: Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSODockett, S. and Perry, B. (1999). Starting school: what matters for children, parents and educators? *Australian Early Childhood Association Research in Practice.* 6(3): 1–16.

Dockett, S and Perry, B. (2001a). Starting school: effective transitions. *Early Childhood Research and Practice.* 3 (2) http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v3n2/dockett.html accessed on Dockett, S. and Perry, B. (2005). Starting school in Australia is 'a bit safer, a lot easier and more relaxing': Issues for families and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. *Early Years* 25(3): 271–281.

Donaldson, M. (1978). *Children's Minds.* London, UK: Penguin.

Dowling, M. (1995). *Starting School at Four: A Joint Endeavour.* London, UK: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Dowling, M. (1998). *Education 3 to 5: A Teachers' Handbook.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Dunlop, A-W. A. (2001). Children's thinking about transitions to school. Paper presented at the 11th European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) Annual Conference, Alkmaar, The Netherlands. 29th August – 1st September.

Dunlop, A-W. A. (2002a). Conclusions. In: Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A-W. A. (eds), *Transitions in the Early Years: Debating continuity and progression for children in early education.* London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer. pp.146–154.

Dunlop, A-W. A. (2002b). Perspectives on children as learners in the transition to school. In: Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A-W. A. (eds) *Transitions in the Early Years: Debating continuity and progression for children in early education.* London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer

Dunlop, A-W. A. (2002c). Early Years Educational Transitions: Working together for children in the early years. Researching Current Transition Practice in Stirling Council, 2001–2002. Report to Stirling Council. Stirling, UK. Glasgow: University of Strathclyde

Dunlop, A-W. A. (2005a). "I'd like to be a fly on the wall": How does children's transition to school affect parents? Paper presented at the 15th European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) Annual Conference, Dublin, Ireland. September 2005.

Dunlop, A-W. A. (2005b)."Don't give yourself a reputation": Accessing the views of secondary school entrants. Paper presented at the Scottish Educational Research Association Annual Conference Perth, Scotland. November 2005.

Dunlop, A-W. A. (2005c). Educational Transitions: The key challenges. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Annual Conference, Glamorgan, Wales. September 2005.

Dunlop, A-W. A. and Fabian, H. (eds.). (2003). Transitions. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, Themed Monograph 1.*

Elder, G. H. Jr. (2001). Families, Social Change, and Individual Lives. *Marriage and Family Review* 31(1/2)177–192.

Entwisle, D. R. and Alexander, K. L. (1998). Faciliating the transition to first grade: The nature of transition and research on factors affecting it. *The Elementary School Journal* 98 (4): 351–364.

Fabian, H. (2002). *Children Starting School,:A guide to successful transitions and transfers for teachers and assistants.* London, UK: David Fulton Publishers.

Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A-W. A. (eds.) (2002a). *Transitions in the Early Years: Debating continuity and progression for children in early education.* London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A-W.A. (2002b). Inter-connexions. *Early Years Matters.* Volume 2, Summer 2002. Glasgow, Scotland: Learning and Teaching Scotland.

Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A-W. A. (2005). The importance of play in the transition to school In: Moyles, J. R. (ed) *The Excellence of Play 2nd Edition.* Berkshire, UK: Open University Press/McGraw-Hill.

Featherstone, S. (2004), Smooth transitions. *Nursery World.* 27 May 2004. Vol 104, No 3919, pp 14-15.

Feldbaum, C. L., Christenson, T. E. and O'Neal, E. (1980). An observational study of the assimilation of the newcomer to the pre-school. *Child Development* 51: 497–507. Filipp, H-S. (1995). Ein allgemeines Modell für die Analyse kritischer Lebensereignisse. *In:* Filipp H- S. (Hrsg.) *Kritische Lebensereignisse* (S. 3 – 52). 3. Aufl. Weinheim, Germany: Beltz.

Fisher, J. (1996). *Starting from the Child.* Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Fonagy, P., Steele, M., Steele, H., Higgit, A. and Target, M. (1994) The theory and practice of resilience. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 35(2): 231–257.

Fortune-Wood, J. (2002). Transitions without school. In: Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A-W. A. (eds.). *Transitions in the Early Years. Debating continuity and progression for children in early education.* London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Fthenakis, W. E. (1998). Family transitions and quality in early childhood education. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 6(1):

Galton, M., Morrison, I., and Pell, T. (2000). Transfer and Transition in English schools: Reviewing the evidence. *International Journal of Educational Research* 33: 341–363.

Ghaye, A. and Pascal, C. (1989). Four-year-old children in reception classrooms: Participant perceptions and practice. *Educational Studies* 14(2): 187–208.

Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with Emotional Intelligence.* London, UK: Bloomsbury.

Goodnow, J. (2001). Commentary: culture and parenting, cross-cutting issues. *International Society or the Study of Behavioural Development Newsletter 1*(38): 13–14.

Govinda, A. (2006). *Early Childhood Education under PESLE – An Analytical Review.* Unpublished Report to the Aga Khan Foundation India.

Gowani, S. and Tiwari, S. (2006). *Girls Education under PESLE.* Unpublished Report to the Aga Khan Foundation India.

Griebel, W. and Niesel, R. (2000). The children's voice in the complex transition into kindergarten and school. Paper presented at the 10th Annual Conference of the European Early Childhood Educational Research Association, London, UK. 29th August – 1st September

Griebel, W. and Niesel, R. (2001). Transition to schoolchild: what children tell us about school and what they teach us. Paper presented at the 11th Annual Conference of the European Early Childhood Education Research Association, Alkmaar, The Netherlands.

Griebel, W. and Niesel, R. (2002). Co-constructing transition into kindergarten and school. In :Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A-W. A. (eds.). *Transitions in the Early Years: Debating continuity and progression for children in early education.* London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Griebel, W. and Niesel, R. (2006). Enhancing transitions competence of the child's social systems through co-construction. In: Dunlop, A-W. A. and Fabian, H. (eds.). *Informing Transitions in the Early Years: Research, Policy and Practice.* Berkshire, UK: Open University Press/McGraw Hill Education.

Gura, P. (1996). Roles and relationships. In: Robson, S. and Smedley, S. (eds.). *Education in Early Childhood.* London, UK: David Fulton Publishers.

Howard, S., Dryden, J. and Johnson, B. (1999). Childhood resilience: Review and critique of literature. *Oxford Review of Education* 25(3): 307–323.

James, A., Jenks, C. and Prout, A. (1998). *Theorising Childhood.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Johansson, I. (2002). Parents' views of transition to school and their influence in this process. In: Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A-W. A. (eds.). *Transitions in the Early Years: Debating continuity and progression for children in early education.* London, UK: Routledge Falmer.

Kagan, S. L. and Neuman, M. J. (1998). Lessons from three decades of transition research. *The Elementary School Journal,* 98(4): 365–380.

Kessler, R. (1999). Initiation – saying good-bye to childhood. *Educational Leadership* December 1999/January 2000: 30–33.

Kidder, T. (1990). *Among School Children.* New York, USA: Avon.

Kienig, A. (1999). Adjustment to new settings in the early years: How to help children with this transition., Paper presented at the 9th European Conference on Quality in Early Childhood Education. Helsinki, Finland, 1–4 September 1999.

Kienig, A. (2002), The importance of social adjustment for future success. In: Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A-W. A. (eds.). *Transitions in the Early Years: Debating continuity and progression for children in early education.* London: RoutledgeFalmer. pp. 23–37.

Krovetz, M. L. (1999). *Fostering Resiliency.* California, USA: Corwin Press.

Ladd, G. W. (1990). Having friends, keeping friends, making friends, and being liked by peers in the classroom: Predictors of children's early school adjustment? Child Development 61: 1081–1100.

Ladd, G. W., and Price, J. M. (1987). Predicting children's social and school adjustment following the transition from pre-school to kindergarten. *Child Development* 58: 1168–1189.

Laurent, C. (2000) The real life class. *Guardian Education* Tuesday 11 April pp. 6–7.

Le Roux, W. (2002) A tracer study of San pre-school children in Botswana. *In: Early Childhood Development Practice and Reflections: No. 15 The Challenge of Change.* The Hague, The Netherlands : Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Lombardi, J. (1992). *Beyond Transition: Ensuring Continuity in Early Childhood Services.* Illinois, USA: ERIC) Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. EDO-PS-92-3.

Love, J. M., Logue, M. E., Trudeau, J. V. and Thayer, K. (1992). *Transition to Kindergarten in American Schools. Final Report of the National Transition Study.* Washington D.C.: Office of Policy and Planning. ERIC) Document Reproduction Service No. ED 344693.

Margetts, K. (1999a). Transition to school: looking forward. Paper presented at the Australian Early Childhood Association National Conference, Darwin, Australia, 14-17 July www.aeca.org.au/darconfmarg.html

Margetts, K. (1999b). Social Skills and Behaviours that Predict Children's Adjustment to the First Year of School. Proceedings of the *Seventh Early Childhood Convention.* Nelson, Aotearoa, New Zealand, 27–30 September.

Margetts, K. (2000). *Establishing Valid Measures of Children's Adjustment to the First Year of Schooling.* Post-Script: www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/insight/postscript.shtml

Margetts, K. (2002). Transition to school – complexity and diversity. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal.* 10(2): 103–114.

McCain, M.N. and Mustard, J. F. (1999). *Early Years Study – Reversing the Real Brain Drain. Final report.* Toronto, Canada: Canadian Institute for Advanced Research.

Mobley, C. and Pullis, M. (1991). Temperament and behavioural adjustment in pre-school children. *Early Childhood Education Research Quarterly* 6: 577–586.

Neuman, M. J. (2000). Hand in hand: Improving the links between early childhood education and care and schools in OECD countries. Paper prepared for the Consultative Meeting on International Developments in Early Childhood Education Council (ECEC). The Institute for Child and Family Policy at Columbia University, USA, 11–12 May

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001) *Starting Strong, Early Childhood Education and Care.* Paris: OECD

Page, J. M. (2000). *Reframing the Early Childhood Curriculum: Educational Imperatives for the Future.* London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Perry, B., Dockett, B. and Howard, P. (2000). Starting school: Issues for children, parents and teachers. *Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education* 7(1): 41–53.

Perry, B., Dockett, S. and Tracey, D. (1998). At pre-school they read to you, at school you learn to read: Perspectives on starting school. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood* 23(4) 6–11.

Peters, S. (1999). Continuity and discontinuity: Issues for parents and teachers seeking to enhance children's transition to school. Paper presented at *Sharing Research in Early Childhood Education.* 3rd Warwick International Early Years Conference, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK, 12–16 April.

Pianta, R.C., Cox, M.J., Taylor, L. & Early, D. (1999) Kindergarten Teachers' Practices Related to the Transition to School: Results of a National Survey. The Elementary School Journal, 100, 1, 71-86.

Pianta, R. C. and Kraft-Sayre, M. (2003). *Successful Kindergarten Transition.* Baltimore, USA: Brooks

Porter, L. (2003). *Young Children's Behaviour: Practical Approaches for Caregivers and Teachers. Second Edition.* London, UK: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Pramling- Samuelsson, I. and Lindahl, M. (1991). Awareness and the life-world: Infants' first experience in pre-school. Paper presented at the 10th International Human Science Research Conference, Göteborg, Sweden. August.

Pramling- Samuelsson, I. and Lindahl, M. (1994). Learning from the toddler's perspective in the context of day-care. Paper presented at the 4th European Conference on the Quality of Early Childhood Education, Göteborg, Sweden.Promising Practices Network.(2003).www.promisingpractices.net/research_strong2003.asp

Psacharopoulous, G. Rojas, C. and Velez, E. (1993) Achievement evaluation of Colombia's Escuela Nueva. Comparative Education Review, 37 (3): 263-276.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) (2000) *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage.* London,UK: QCA.

Qvortrup, J., Bardy, M., Sgritta, G. and Wintersberger, H. (eds.), (1994). *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics.* Aldershot, UK: Avebury.

Rodrigues, A.M. (2000) *Final Report on the Evaluation of the Project "Effecting a Smooth Transition form Nursery to Primary". Report to UNICEF Guyana.*

Roffey, S. and O'Reirdan, T. (2001). Y*oung Children and Classroom Behaviour: Needs Perspectives and Strategies. Second Edition.* London, UK: David Fulton Publishers.

Rugh, A. and Bossert, H. (1998) Escuela Nueva in Coombia. In *Involving Communities: participation in the Delivery of Education Programs.* Washington, DC, Creative Associates/USAID.

Schaefer, E. S., and Edgerton, M. (1985). Parent and child correlates of parental modernity. In: Sigel, I. E. (ed.). *Parental Belief Systems: The Psychological Consequences for Children* Hillsdale, New Jersey, USA: Erlbaum. pp. 287–318.

Stephen, C. and Brown, S. (2002). Cultures of practice in the early years: What are we doing with the children? Paper presented at the 4th Warwick International Early Years Conference. Warwick University, UK. March.

Thyssen, S. (2000). The child's start in daycare. *Early Child Development and Care* 161: 33–46.

UNESCO (2002) Integrating Early Childhood Into Education: *The Case of Sweden Policy Brief on Early Childhood.* No. 3. http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=43971andURL_DO=DO_TOPICandURL_SECTION=201.html

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) www.unicef.org/crc/ and www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm accessed on 03.12.05

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2004) *The State of the World's Children 2004.* School Readiness Program: Assessment Report. Phonm Penh, Cambodia. New York. UNICEF.

van Gennep, A. (1960). *Rites of Passage.* (Translation by Vizedom, M. B. and Caffee, G. L.). London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Webb, J., Schirato, T. and Danaher, G. (2002). Understanding Bourdieu. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Welzer, H. (1993). *Transitionen. Zur Sozialpsychologie biographischer Wandlungsprozesse.* Cited by Griebel, W. and Niesel, R. (2002). Co-constructing transition into kindergarten and school. In: Fabian, H. and Dunlop, A-W. A. (eds.).*Transitions in the Early Years.:Debating continuity and progression for children in early education.* London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Winnicott, D. W. (1974). *Playing and Reality.* Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.

www.ifs.org.uk Does early education have long-lasting effects? Press release 09.12.05

Yeboah, D.A. (2002). Enhancing transition from early childhood phase to elementary education: Evidence from the research literature. *Early Years* 22(1) 51-68.

Bernard van Leer Foundation

Bernard van Leer Foundation
P.O. Box 82334
2508 EH The Hague
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 (0)70 331 2200
Fax: +31 (0)70 350 2373
Email: registry@bvleerf.nl
www.bernardvanleer.org

About the Bernard van Leer Foundation

The Bernard van Leer Foundation funds and shares knowledge about work in early childhood development. The foundation was established in 1949 and is based in the Netherlands. Our income is derived from the bequest of Bernard van Leer, a Dutch industrialist and philanthropist, who lived from 1883 to 1958.

Our mission is to improve opportunities for children up to age 8 who are growing up in socially and economically difficult circumstances. We see this both as a valuable end in itself and as a long-term means to promoting more cohesive, considerate and creative societies with equality of opportunity and rights for all.

We work primarily by supporting programmes implemented by partners in the field. These include public, private and community-based organisations. Our strategy of working through partnerships is intended to build local capacity, promote innovation and flexibility, and help to ensure that the work we fund is culturally and contextually appropriate.

We currently support about 140 major projects. We focus our grantmaking on 21 countries in which we have built up experience over the years. These include both developing and industrialised countries and represent a geographical range that encompasses Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas.

We work in three issue areas:

- Through "Strengthening the Care Environment" we aim to build the capacity of vulnerable parents, families and communities to care for their children.
- Through "Successful Transitions: The Continuum from Home to School" we aim to help young children make the transition from their home environment to daycare, preschool and school.
- Through "Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity" we aim to promote equal opportunities and skills that will help children to live in diverse societies.

Also central to our work is the ongoing effort to document and analyse the projects we support, with the twin aims of learning lessons for our future grantmaking activities and generating knowledge we can share. Through our evidence-based advocacy and publications, we aim to inform and influence policy and practice both in the countries where we operate and beyond.

Information on the series

Working Papers in Early Childhood Development is a 'work in progress' series that presents relevant findings and reflection on issues relating to early childhood care and development. The series acts primarily as a forum for the exchange of ideas, often arising out of field work, evaluations and training experiences. As 'think pieces' we hope these papers will evoke responses and lead to further information sharing from among the readership.

The findings, interpretations, conclusions and opinions expressed in this series are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

ISBN 978-90-6195-096-7