

# National Report Summary

ERO publishes evaluation reports on education issues of national importance. This handout is a summary of a recent national report - it captures the key points and highlights findings which you may find useful. The full report is available on our website - [www.ero.govt.nz](http://www.ero.govt.nz)

## Evaluation at a Glance: Transitions from Primary to Secondary School (December 2012)

The middle school years (Years 7 to 10) can be a particularly challenging time. Students face having to move between and through schools while also dealing with the increased social, emotional and physiological changes of adolescence.

Effective transitions into and through secondary schools are important to a student's future achievement and wellbeing.

ERO's report, *Evaluation at a Glance: Transitions from Primary to Secondary School*, combines current research with findings from recent ERO reports. The report discusses the important pastoral care and learning support processes needed for students to successfully and seamlessly move into and through secondary school.

### Six factors of successful transitions

The report focuses on six factors that contribute to successful transitions:

- *understanding the features and importance of education transition*
- *preparing well for successful transitions*
- *providing additional support for vulnerable students*
- *using effective transition processes*
- *introducing a curriculum that responds to the diversity of the students*
- *ongoing monitoring and review of transition processes.*

### What do successful transitions look like for students?

When a transition is successful, students feel that:

- they belong in their new school, and are well included in school activities and programmes
- they are positively connected to their peers, other students in the school, and to their teachers
- their teachers know them, including their strengths, interests and learning needs, and show they are interested in them
- their teachers understand the importance of their language, culture and identity
- they have a sense of purpose in being at school
- they have an understanding and commitment to their learning pathway through their schooling and beyond
- they are making progress
- their current learning follows on from their previous learning (the curriculum is connected and continuous) and is appropriately challenging
- learning is interesting, relevant and fun
- their families have been included in decisions
- they are physically and emotionally safe
- they have opportunities to try new, exciting things and/or extend their particular skills/interests (e.g. through extra-curricular activities).

## Successful transitions – shifting your focus from less to more

### *Less of*

- Viewing transitions as end-of-year and beginning-of-year events.
- Thinking that all students transition in the same way.
- Leaving the planning for vulnerable students until the last minute.
- Doing one-off orientation activities for all students.
- Doing the planning for vulnerable students without including them and their families.
- Expecting that a few people in the school will manage transitions (e.g. deans and form teachers)
- Assuming that all students are transitioning well.
- Focussing only on the year 8 to 9 student transition.
- Giving students a predetermined curriculum.
- Viewing all students as if they are of the same culture.
- Expecting all students to do the same work (at the same level, and at the same time).
- Thinking that it is the student's fault for failing to make the adjustments to their new school.

### *More of*

- Thinking about transitions as a process whereby students make gradual adjustments to their teachers, peers and to the programme. This adjustment will be different for each student.
- Taking a long-term view to transition approaches by helping students to build the Key Competencies of *The New Zealand Curriculum*.
- Identifying early the students who are likely to need support as they transition.
- Including in the planning process all the people who are connected to a student.
- Acknowledging that some students will need different approaches and catering for them through specific, and evidence-informed initiatives or actions.
- Building a school-wide culture of pastoral and learning care for students.
- Ensuring that school systems for pastoral and learning care are sustainable by aligning them to existing systems.
- Checking on how well transitions are happening for students by talking with students, parents and whānau, and teachers.
- Catering for students as they transition within the school.
- Getting to know students' interests, strengths and learning needs and using these as the foundation of an engaging programme.
- Acknowledging and responding to the cultural identities of all students.
- Finding out what students know and can do. Pitching work at an appropriately challenging level so that students experience success.
- Involving students and their parents in planning their learning pathways.



### FIND OUT MORE

For more ideas and information, you can read the full report online at [www.ero.govt.nz/national-reports](http://www.ero.govt.nz/national-reports)

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa  
The Child – the Heart of the Matter