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**Rationale:** The transition to Kindergarten from either the home, pre-school or child-care setting can be a very stressful and emotional time for all involved. At Cattai Public School we have developed a program that will help beginning Kindergarten children and their families prepare for the changes that are associated with starting school.

It is important that all children and their families feel welcome during this time and that parents are well informed of strategies that can help their children manage the transition to Kindergarten. Having enjoyable experiences during the early years of school can help both children and parents form a positive outlook about their future schooling and also helps develop mutually beneficial relationships between the school and home.

Our transition program involves the kindergarten teacher visiting the local pre-schools to meet the potential new enrolments and to maintain links with the pre-school teaching staff. Other features of the programme include the new kindergarten students and their families are invited to visit the school on up to 4 occasions, giving each new kindergarten student a 'buddy' from year 5 who will be a continue to offer support into the new year, providing a range of information to the families to help prepare for the new year and a welcome pack for each child and their family.

Our transition program consists of an Orientation Day in term 4 for the children and their families, followed by 3 extra visits for the children to the Kindergarten classroom. Each visit lasts for approximately 1½ hours and finishes with the visitors having morning tea with the current students.

#### **Pre-School Visits:**

- In consultation with the local pre-schools, a number of visits are organised for the kindergarten teacher to read and get to know the potential enrolments. These visits also give the kindergarten teacher an opportunity to keep in contact with the pre-school teachers.
- The kindergarten teacher will attend information nights that the local pre-schools hold for parents of new kindergarten children. This gives parents an opportunity to make initial contact with the teacher and discuss any concerns.

#### **Orientation Days:**

- The initial orientation day will have will involve the new kindergarten children participating in some prepared activities in the classroom with current kindergarten and year 1 students. The activities will generally include a story, some craft activities and some child-directed play. This session will give the teacher an opportunity to observe some general developmental skills.
- At the end the first orientation day visit each kindergarten child will be presented with a gift bag that will include a picture storybook and a range of extra items decided by the principal and kindergarten teacher.
- The first day will also give the principal the opportunity to meet the children's parents and to discuss the main points of the transition program and ideas for making the start of school as enjoyable as possible. During this meeting the principal will also explain the Best Start assessment program and explain how it will be used by the teacher to develop educational programs for the class and students.
- The remaining orientation days will include a range of activities such as sport, craft, child-directed play and other simple, enjoyable activities.
- Following the orientation days a postcard with important dates will be sent to each family

**Buddy System:**

- During the orientation visits each child will be assigned a 'buddy' from year 5 that will be there to support the kindergarten child during his or her first year.
- The buddy will be asked to send a letter (with photo included) to their kindergarten child telling them a bit about themselves and also about how exciting school is. This will be sent home with the postcard.

**Evaluation:**

- Based on the information gained through formal and informal discussions with the current kindergarten children and their families, the kindergarten teacher and principal will plan for the following year's transition program.

**Effective - October 2009**  
**Review – October 2011**