

Bridging the gap between early years and primary school

Starting school can be stressful for both children and their families but a community approach can make the transition to school life much easier. This was the key message from a recent *'Linking Early Years Services and Schools'* workshop held in Korumburra.

Facilitated by Deb Sestak and Leonie Symes from the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, the workshop looked at the barriers faced by children and the benefits of creating partnerships between early years' services, schools and the community.

"It is important that children arrive at school with the necessary skills to make the most of their learning opportunity" said Sally Baker, Coordinator Children and Family Services. "Unfortunately, research shows that approximately one in four children will face significant limitations in being developmentally ready for school. As a community, it is important that we work together to remove these barriers."

The workshop was attended by kindergarten and primary school representatives from Korumburra, Loch, Nyora and Poowong as well as Council and the Karmai Learning Alliance. The group looked at local issues that could prevent children from receiving a positive 'start-to-school' experience and looked at how, collectively, they could work together to overcome them.

"The workshop provided a great opportunity to get everyone together to work towards a common goal" continued Sally. "Our aim is that all of our primary schools in this area will work together with all of the early childhood services to help meet the needs of families, especially families with children making the transition to school life. Together we can help ensure local children are well-equipped for their education journey."

The *'Linking Early Years Services and Schools'* workshop was targeted to early childhood and children services in the Korumburra, Loch, Nyora and Poowong areas. The local schools already share a strong connection through the Karmai Learning Alliance working to improve transition from kindergarten to primary school, primary school to secondary school and the education journey beyond.

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