

Preschool and schooling transition options - Student Support Services

Ian May: [00:00:00] I'm going to introduce Kylie Cooley and Jen Bratovic my colleagues in support services. And they're going to talk about the support services role and how it supports schools and preschools, and then children and students with their learning at school. Now some of you might know Jen from the last webinar because you presented about transition and we got lots of really good comments around that, Jen. And we're also going to follow up a little bit more with transition with another workshop that I'll tell parents about a little bit later, but, welcome back, welcome Kylie.

I suppose because we're a big department, Department for Education is, you know, we've got our preschools and schools and that's where most parents of course connect with. But then around the schools and preschools, we have a number of supports and we I'd like to just talk to you about, well, what are those supports, what are the services? Where are they located? How do you access them? And just to unpack them for you.

So it helps you understand the whole landscape that's available for your child at school or preschool. So I think Jen, you're going to lead the first bit and then I'm going to follow up the next.

Jen Bratovic: [00:01:15] Fantastic. Thanks very much Ian. So Kylie welcome, would you like to talk to us about student support services.

Kylie Cooley: [00:01:25] Sure. So I guess student support services works with preschools and schools where there are children and young people have particular educational needs. So these might include things like developmental delays or disability learning difficulties, behaviour issues. So might be social and emotional, health and wellbeing issues, disengagement, non-attendance issues or communication difficulties. So we have a range of, support services staff, which range from, behavior coaches, who are actually teachers who work with, school leadership teams often, to build on their knowledge and skills that can help students with additional, behavior support needs.

So they might work with schools and families. You know, around training and development, they might work around, developing plans to support the young person at school. We also have special educators who, again are teachers, and they support schools and families, to improve the learning and wellbeing for students with disabilities that might include hearing impairment and then learning difficulties or, and or health support needs.

We also have our Aboriginal education services that sit within student support services. And this is the team that works specifically with schools, to support, the engagement of our Aboriginal children in their learning. So they provide a really good understanding of Aboriginal culture and community knowledge, which underpins the work that they do with schools.

We also have speech pathologists, and they're one of our allied health services. They work with, preschools and schools around, helping young people who might have particular speech language or communication needs. So they might do things like assessments, intervention services, as well as working with teachers and SSOs, implement programs in school and meet the learning goals and also the wellbeing needs of those young people.

We also have psychologists, who again are an allied health service. And they really work to assess and identify young people with additional learning and behavioural needs. So a psychologist might help schools and preschools to choose and carry out interventions that are recommended, to support learning, enjoyment and wellbeing at school.

We also have our social work truancy team, and they, a service of social workers, again, allied health, who supports schools to create inclusive learning environments to encourage, engagement, in school for these young people. We also have another service that's called our EALD team or an English as an Additional Dialect, language or dialect.

And they work with students, teachers, school leaders, and families to help children and young people whose first language is not English, but they help them to adapt and thrive at school.

Jen Bratovic: [00:04:10] Fantastic. That's very big team with lots of diverse skills. So how do families, you know, parents raise their concerns?

Kylie Cooley: [00:04:19] Sure. Yeah. So we would encourage families to speak to your child's school or preschool, and raise concerns, with them have that conversation and then they will be able to assist you, in the process of, I guess, getting student support services onboard.

Jen Bratovic: [00:04:35] So what can that referral process to support services look like?

Kylie Cooley: [00:04:40] Sure.

So look like the school or preschool having a conversation with you in the first instance and discussing your concerns and then I guess looking at what are some of the common concerns between the school and the parent. Our service providers might come in and give advice and recommendations.

They might ask the school or the preschool to apply these recommendations. And then out of that, if there's actually further assistance or specialist assistance that's needed, we'll ask them to, again, discuss these concerns with you and then refer to our services through a process that schools can initiate.

We will only do this after we have permission.

Jen Bratovic: [00:05:19] I was going to ask that. So that's great. And the parents that are interested to know that.

Absolutely,

Kylie Cooley: [00:05:23] so we will only become involved once we have parent permission. And at any time throughout that process, if you do not want student support services to be involved, you can actually withdraw that permission at any time.

Jen Bratovic: [00:05:37] Okay. And so following the referral, what might the next steps be?

Kylie Cooley: [00:05:41] Sure. I guess, once we have a referral, we will certainly initiate contact with the school and the family around looking at what the general concerns are. We'll work with you, your child, and the school staff to look at how we can best support your child to thrive at school.

It is a time specific service, so we'll have clear goals that we will work with to guide us. And I guess we might do this by reviewing existing information that might exist, or reports, observing your child in the classroom or elsewhere in the school. We might conduct formal assessments and provide recommendations.

We might discuss your child's learning behavior challenges with yourself. Or the school or preschool. We might hold self-training sessions. We might coach and mentor staff. We might help staff to develop strategies to support your child. We might coordinate other services, and we might refer your child to other supports, or agencies if required.

Jen Bratovic: [00:06:42] So lots of options. If parents and carers have more, you know, further queries and, you know, we'd like some more information, whereabouts can they access that?

Kylie Cooley: [00:06:52] Sure there is a parent brochure, and you can access that on the website. So the website is, on your screen now. And if you actually go into that website, you'll be able to download a copy of the parent brochure in there.

Also schools will have access to these brochures, so you can actually approach your school and get more information through the school if needed.

Jen Bratovic: [00:07:17] Fantastic. Thank you, Kylie. That was very comprehensive.

Ian May: [00:07:20] One of the questions is, is the service free in the department?

Kylie Cooley: [00:07:24] Yes, it is free.

Ian May: [00:07:25] available. And is it a statewide service?

Kylie Cooley: [00:07:28] It is a state-wide service, yes.

Ian May: [00:07:30] So it's very comprehensive. Obviously some of the children might have an NDIS provider and we've got our department providers. What are the sort of the connections around that?

Kylie Cooley: [00:07:41] Well, we'd certainly make sure that we're working with those NDIS providers in terms of sharing information.

And also, so we're not duplicating service and that's really important because when we're working with families particularly, or engaging with a lot of service providers, we don't want that duplication of service. So we would certainly, maintain that communication with those services.

Ian May: [00:08:04] Yeah. So I think that connection is really important it's because the NDIS.

This is a very relatively new, and our service in the departments existed for a long time. I think getting those connections even more clear is going to be what, you know, it will help, parents and of course the children and the students. So that's quite exciting though.

Kylie Cooley: [00:08:24] So I would just like to thank Tiffany for all her great, questions and comments so far.

Tiffany, has certainly been involved in a lot of the, the parent consultation around the new parent brochure, which is now accessible on the website.

Ian May: [00:08:41] And what discipline are you Kylie?

Kylie Cooley: [00:08:53] Education background.

Ian May: [00:08:54] And Jen?

Jen Bratovic: [00:08:55] Same, education background.

Ian May: [00:08:58] Yes. We have psychologists and speech therapists in here as well. So because it is a multi-discipline area. So. So I think that paints a picture of supports that are available within the department for our schools and preschools. Jen, last time you really presented around transition and the importance of it. My takeaway messages last time were plan early, work collaboratively, document and involve the child in where they'd like to go. Have I remembered those key messages?

Jen Bratovic: [00:09:38] Yes, communication, partnership, and planning were the three.

Ian May: [00:09:43] So the people, if you weren't involved in the last webinars, they were important messages. Jen talked around supporting children, not only going from a school to post school, but from, from the earliest stages throughout the schooling experience.

So one of the questions that subsequently came out was, in our department, we do have what we would call specialised educational options. And it's probably one of the questions we were asked, because you unpacked for us what they are like, what we mean when we side specialised educational options?

Jen Bratovic: [00:10:22] Okay. Well, first of all, I'd just like to restate that all children, disability, or not with no disability, have the option of going to their local school. So that's, that's the first step. But there are lots of different options available. From preschool all the way through schooling. So within the preschool setting, there is The Briars Preschool,

There's also the Kilparrin Early Intervention for children with sensory, vision, deaf, hard of hearing needs. And then within schools, there are special classes, there are disability units and special schools. And actually I forgot the speech and language class and program that is for children in the junior primary years, for reception, years one and year two.

Ian May: [00:11:08] Okay. So they're located right across the state. Where, where, where are most of these options?

Jen Bratovic: [00:11:14] Oh, there are a number of them yes, around the state. The specialist programs, the Kilparrin early learning center, the Klemzig AUSLAN preschool and school as well. The inclusive preschool programs, the South Australian school for vision impairment, those are, metropolitan based.

And then there are the special school disability unit and special classes are both metro, but also there are some, options, regionally as well.

Ian May: [00:11:42] Now for a child or a student to think about it would be suitable to attend, how does that happen? What's the criteria? What are the processes around this?

Jen Bratovic: [00:11:56] Okay, well, families, you know, may well have a range of assessment, assessment information, diagnostic information that they already have for their child. So a discussion may occur with the school, the parents will raise that. Permission of course is sought, Kylie has already alluded to that and it will be the department psychologist who will actually look at those reports, information from you, who may undertake additional assessments, and then they will make a determination about meeting eligibility criteria for, for whatever the option is, that your child might be eligible for a specialised option, but you might not want to investigate that.

And so there's no, there's no pressure to, to, to follow that path. It is an option that is available. And so again, with your permission, an application package that has all of those reports, I've just talked about and perhaps, individual learning plans and so on will be submitted to a panel process.

Ian May: [00:12:55] So the panel process, so who is on the panel? For parents' transparency, walk us through the steps and sort of decision making.

Jen Bratovic: [00:13:05] OK, the panel is usually often chaired by, the senior educator so that someone with an education background. There will be psychologists. And then it's usually a team because there may be many applications to be considered.

If the application is potentially for, a specialist setting for sensory needs, vision, deaf, hard of hearing, then there will probably be someone, an expert in that field, and a speech pathologist would be on those panels. For the junior primary, primary, disability unit sort of options that we've talked about it will primarily be, educators and psychologists who work in pairs together and, and look at the applications.

Ian May: [00:13:47] I'd imagine, for some families, it's a time where there's some anxiety and what sort of communication do parents get? How do they keep informed about where the process is at and what's the steps?

Sure.

Jen Bratovic: [00:14:02] Once the panel has met, panels try as quickly as possible to get the information out to the site leaders, the preschool leader or the school leader, principal, about the outcome of the panel, then, then they will be in touch with the families, as quickly as possible. Of course, absolutely you're right, there will be anxiety, you know, it's, it's a big journey and you've told your story a lot in, in wherever you are currently attending. And so moving forward, you're going to have to reestablish the relationships and tell the stories again. I would always advise that if you feeling that you haven't heard, or you don't know where things are up to that to actually get in touch with your child's current school or preschool, and then they can get in touch with the, the special educator who supports the preschool or school and kind of backtrack and ask those questions on your behalf.

Ian May: [00:14:53] Yes. And for 2020, for 2021, I understand the secondary placement processes happen first because of course that's in line with all year sevens, which will soon be all of our year sevens, selecting their high school. So that process is done, is it the secondary?

Jen Bratovic: [00:15:15] Yeah, that's done

Ian May: [00:15:16] And the younger years. Where are we at with primary and junior primary?

Jen Bratovic: [00:15:20] The junior primary and primary panels sit this term. So there may, some offers may have already gone out and there may still be some offers yet to go out. So I'd say that those processes are kind of in train at the moment.

Ian May: [00:15:35] Because it's probably across the state, there's probably some offices that have started that communication and others about to, is that fair to say?

Jen Bratovic: [00:15:44] Yeah by and large, we try and keep everything as consistent for timelines across that, you know, inevitably somebody might be away or there's just a little bit of, you know, flexibility around that.

Ian May: [00:15:56] One of the questions that's come through is, from, from, carers. If they need to talk to someone, you're suggesting the school, the preschool is their first point of call. And if, and if there was someone in support services that's available as well?

Jen Bratovic: [00:16:13] Yes. Yes. I would imagine that most of the families have a relationship probably with the special educator who was supporting the preschool or school because they've probably been in a number of meetings together in that, that journey. So I think they would be a port of call. So first of all, the school or preschool, the child's teacher or the leader, and then the special educator, I would suggest would be the next person.

Ian May: [00:16:37] If a parent wanted to talk, not about attending a specialised education option, but as you said, the local school, what sort of supports, how do they go about that discussion?

What's available?

Jen Bratovic: [00:16:50] At transition points that's often a really good opportunity to relook at support requirements and what that might look like. There is the Inclusive Education Support program that actually is an option for, you know, for additional resourcing and the school, with the family and with the teachers will actually submit an application that they'll provide all the reports and so on that the family has provided. And then that information goes to a panel, a statewide panel, and, resourcing is determined.

Ian May: [00:17:27] A parent is asking, about their child who has serious health issues and, needs a very careful health management programs. So, any comments around how that is also built into the process and what's available?

Jen Bratovic: [00:17:42] Same as I have just talked about, the special educator I imagine is already well aware. And at that transition point, you probably start those, those conversations now, because you'd be wanting to, to know information from the health, allied health and health professionals who are supporting the child and the family. Because, how the child is in this school or preschool and where they're going to, there may be some modifications that need to be made. So those definitely there'll be the special educator again, I'm throwing the special educator that might not thank me, but anyway, that's, that is the nuts and bolts of their work for sure.

Ian May: [00:18:23] And to add on to that, because transition is such an important time I would really suggest if a child has a healthcare plan or any plan that supports their health. If that's its really good that that's current, updated and if there is supports that the school preschool need to do, that it is really clear.

And the other thing as a department, we've got a strong relationship with SA Health. Some students get supported with a health support officer and so we will also build that into the transitionary process. I really want to, thank our two presenters around what are support services. So thanks Kylie and Jen about following on about transition and the importance of it and the whole process about specialised options.

That information is going to be once again, available. It's on the Special Education Resource Unit website. And we can follow up if there's any further live questions around that as well. So, we're walking the journey with you. It's a time that we know transition is pivotal for children and so we really want to get it right. And, keep you informed as, as parents and as families of, of this whole step in the journey of learning. So thank you both again.

Kylie Cooley: [00:19:43] Thank you.

Jen Bratovic: [00:19:44] Can I just quickly add that, the brochure is downloadable, but as with the last two, brochures, if a families would like a hard copy that they can send in a request to the website and at the hard copy can be sent.

Ian May: [00:19:57] Oh that'd be great. So, it's always good to have good information around, what's available. So it's great. I'd like to do a little bit of a wrap up all of our, webinar today. Thank you for all the questions that are coming in. So the recording of this will be available in a few days, time, once again, on the SERU webpage. We always ask for valuable feedback.

We're always trying to improve, make it better, and seek what we're doing well, what we could think about for the future, we really appreciate any time around that. Please look at the special education centre website. Now, a few things that are happening next term, and there's so much I have to refer to my page because it is exciting some of the things that are, there to support.

There's going to be some workshops. Now these are going to be face to face down at SERU, but we are going to videotape them. Because it's a COVID time and this one is face to face, 17 is the maximum. So if you'd like to register for these, so in Adelaide, they're available.

So the first one is around post school options and that's going to be on the 16th of September, 11 o'clock to 12 o'clock and we're going to have a representative from the NDIS there so Aaron will be there. So post school options, 16th of September. Then on the 22nd of September is Social Skills again, 11am to 12pm will be a workshop available down at the Special Education Resource Centre.

So both of them are available. Now webinars and activities for going into Term 4. For your diary, our next webinar like this, is on the 3rd of November, 11 o'clock to 12 o'clock and we've already got some ideas of, activities, to talk about. One might be around the department is about to launch a behavior, a positive behavior policy, and some supports that are available, which really follows on a bit of what Kylie is talking around, about behavior coaches and what Caitlin was talking around with Interoception. So we will possibly have that as a topic to talk to have a look at. There's also another workshop that's available, that will be advertised on event arc on the 20th of October, it's from 10:00 AM to 12. 10am to 12 and it's around, problemised, sexualised behaviors with children.

So it's, it's really quite a sensitive topic so we're not going to be video taping that one, but we're going to have some parents that are going to be talking around our approach as a department. So it's a more of a consultative process. So will we putting all of those up. Now also, we thank the parent reference group.

So we have a team of parents that work with a couple of the dedicated staff. And you would know some of these people, with Barbara who's behind the scenes coordinating everything, so thank you to those and thank you to the parent reference group. We would like anybody who would like to join the reference group to shape some of these dialogue, discussions, to shape out workshops and to connect with us. From the workshop I'd like to thank, Ben who's a student an ex student from, Springbank College.

He is now in the workforce in horticulture, but he's representing our department and the state in part of the consultations around the Disability Standards Review. So there is a Youth

Advisory group and, Ben is representing us, as a state, as a state in the, as an education department.

So that process will be coming up soon. So I'd really like to thank Ben.

As we conclude. Thank you to all our presenters. Thank you for the effort that you've put into constructing a conversation. Thank you to the people that are online and behind the scenes here who have coordinated the event.

The recording is available in a few days, as I said, love the feedback about the survey. So the link is visible in the panel on the right hand side, apparently. Also available for, email and the details are once again on your screen. So thank you really appreciate it for everyone, I really hope everyone, wherever you are, is safe, well, and, see you at the next time, whether it's face to face or online, like this. Keep safe. Keep, well, thank you.

Jen Bratovic: [00:24:46] Thank you.