

Appendix 3
Questionnaire for Preschool Practitioners

SECTION A: INDIVIDUAL SETTING

A1: Service Type. What type of preschool is your service?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private Playgroup | <input type="checkbox"/> Early Start Preschool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Playgroup | <input type="checkbox"/> Traveller Preschool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Naíonraí | <input type="checkbox"/> Montessori Preschool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please clarify: _____ | |

A2. How many years have you been working with preschool children?

- This is my first year working with preschoolers
 1-5 years
 5-10 years
 10+ years

A3: Do you hold a qualification in childcare? Yes
 No

If yes, please indicate (referring to your highest qualification):

- | | |
|-------|--------------------|
| _____ | Qualification |
| _____ | Length of Training |
| _____ | Full or Part Time |
| _____ | Awarding Body |

A4: At your preschool, who makes the decision about when a child is ready to start formal schooling?

- parents
 parents in conjunction with preschool teacher
 preschool teacher
 other, please explain _____

A5: Can you please estimate the percentage of parents who ask your opinion as preschool teacher as to whether you feel their child is ready for school?

- 0-20% 20-40% 40-60% 60-80% 80-100%

A6. Please categorise your preschool as being located in either an “Urban” or a “Rural” area?

- Urban Rural

A7. Please categorise your preschool as being located in either “Disadvantaged” or “Non-Disadvantaged” area?

- Disadvantaged Non-Disadvantaged

SECTION B: GENERAL BELIEFS ON TRANSITION PROCESS

B1: From your personal experience, could you estimate the percentage of children you feel may have some difficulties making the transition to formal schooling?

___ 0-20% ___ 20-40% ___ 40-60% ___ 60-80% ___ 80-100%

B2: Please circle the number which best indicates your level of agreement that each of the following groups of children are at risk in general terms of experiencing a difficult transition to formal schooling.
Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree

Children who have not been to preschool are at risk of experiencing a difficult transition to formal schooling	1 2 3 4 5
Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are at risk of experiencing a difficult transition to formal schooling	1 2 3 4 5
Children from minority groups are at risk of experiencing a difficult transition to formal schooling	1 2 3 4 5
Children in urban areas are at greater risk of experiencing a difficult transition to school than those in rural areas	1 2 3 4 5
Children with special needs are at risk of experiencing a difficult transition to formal schooling	1 2 3 4 5
Children with low self esteem are at risk of experiencing a difficult transition to formal schooling	1 2 3 4 5
Children entering school without a “friend” in their class are at risk of experiencing a difficult transition to formal school	1 2 3 4 5
Children with behaviour problems are at risk of experiencing a difficult transition to formal schooling	1 2 3 4 5
Children who find it difficult to listen and sit still are at risk of experiencing a difficult transition to formal schooling	1 2 3 4 5
Firstborn children are at risk of experiencing a difficult transition to formal schooling	1 2 3 4 5
Boys, rather than girls are at risk of experiencing a difficult transition to formal schooling	1 2 3 4 5
The youngest children entering school are at risk of experiencing a difficult transition to formal schooling	1 2 3 4 5

B3: Do you feel that entrance to Junior Infants class should be decided on age or whether the child is has developed the necessary personal, social, and intellectual skills to succeed in formal schooling?

_____ Age _____ Socially, emotionally and intellectually ready _____ Both

How would you judge if a child has developed the necessary social, emotional and intellectual skills to succeed in formal schooling?

B4: Are there any other factors (apart from age and the personal skills of the child) that you feel influence parents on when to send their child to formal schooling?

B5: Please circle the number which best indicates your level of agreement that the skills listed below are important for children to possess on arrival at school.

Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree

Independence and self help skills are important for children to possess on arrival at school	1 2 3 4 5
The ability to listen, sit still, and take turns, are important skills for children to possess on arrival at school	1 2 3 4 5
Preacademic skills, such as letter recognition, are important for children to possess on arrival at school	1 2 3 4 5
Social skills are important for children to possess on arrival at school	1 2 3 4 5
Problem-solving skills are important for children to possess on arrival at school	1 2 3 4 5
Communication and language skills are important skills for children to possess on arrival at school	1 2 3 4 5

B6: In your opinion, what are the three most important skills for a child to possess on arrival at school?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

SECTION C: TRANSITION PRACTICES ALREADY IN PLACE IN YOUR PRESCHOOL, AND THAT YOU BELIEVE SHOULD BE PUT IN PLACE IN PRESCHOOLS

C1: From the list below please tick the practices that your preschool has in place, and that you believe should be put in place generally, to facilitate transition to formal schooling. (Please tick all that apply)

	<i>Practices already in place in my preschool</i>	<i>Practices I think should be in place in preschools</i>
Discussion about what to expect at primary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange class visit(s) to a primary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incorporate academic skills into preschool curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage independence in children, responsibility for self and belongings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of classroom-type rules (eg, stand in line/wait your turn)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<i>Practices already in place in my school</i>	<i>Practices I think should be in place</i>
Undertake evaluations (eg, strengths/support needs) of children to pass to teachers of junior infants classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish ongoing communication with receiving teachers of junior infants classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hold discussion with parents on readiness of children who plan to start formal schooling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Devise a written “transition plan” outlining practices put in place to smooth the transition process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION D: WAYS IN WHICH PRIMARY SCHOOLS COULD ASSIST THE TRANSITION PROCESS

D1: Do you think **PRIMARY SCHOOLS** should undertake the following activities to help with the smooth transition of children from preschool to school?

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
Send letters to parents prior to school term start	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Send letters to children prior to school term start	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange parent meeting prior to school term start	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange home visits prior to term start	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange one child visit to school prior to term start	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange a series of child visits to school prior to term start	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange preschool group visits to school prior to term start	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish communication with preschool teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visit preschools and observe children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review preschool evaluations of children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage new friendships for children starting school without a friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION E: SUGGESTIONS TAKEN FROM THE LITERATURE ON THE TRANSITION TO FORMAL SCHOOLING

E1: Below are some suggestions aimed at smoothing the transition process. Please circle the number which best indicates your level of agreement that each statement is important for children’s transition to formal schooling
Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree

Parents should promote the skills of social competence and resiliency, prior to transition to formal schooling	1 2 3 4 5
Preschool teachers should promote the skills of social competence and resiliency prior to transition	1 2 3 4 5

Teachers of junior infants classes should promote the skills of social competence and resiliency, on arrival at school	1 2 3 4 5
Information and evaluations on individual children should be transferred from preschool to school	1 2 3 4 5
Preschools should be located within schools where possible	1 2 3 4 5
There should be greater communication between preschool and primary school teachers	1 2 3 4 5
There should be greater communication between preschool teachers and parents	1 2 3 4 5
There should be greater communication between primary school teachers and parents	1 2 3 4 5
School entry age should be raised from four years so children are more mature when making the transition to formal school	1 2 3 4 5
The curriculum in the infants classes should have a greater focus on learning through play	1 2 3 4 5
Class sizes in the early years of school should be reduced	1 2 3 4 5

E1: Below are some barriers, identified by researchers, to ensuring a successful transition to formal schooling. Please circle the number which best indicates your level of agreement with each statement

Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Disagree

Cultural differences between preschools and primary school are a barrier to a successful transition for children	1 2 3 4 5
Differences in curricula of preschools and primary school are a barrier to a successful transition for children	1 2 3 4 5
Differences in training/professional preparation of preschool and primary school teachers cause barriers to transition	1 2 3 4 5
Lack of communication between preschool and primary school teachers causes barriers to successful transitions	1 2 3 4 5
Preschool teachers not having direct experience of junior infants classrooms causes barriers to successful transitions	1 2 3 4 5
Teachers of junior infants not having direct experience of preschool classrooms causes barriers to successful transitions	1 2 3 4 5
Number of “feeder” preschools and “receiving” schools makes preschool/school coordination difficult	1 2 3 4 5
Decision to start children in school based on age rather than individual preparedness for school causes barriers...	1 2 3 4 5
Children arriving at formal schooling with a variety of preschool (or not) experiences causes barriers...	1 2 3 4 5

If you have any other comments to make on the process of transition from preschool to school, I would be very interested to hear them (please continue on the back of this sheet):

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.