

Linking Schools and Early Years

The Linking Schools and Early Years (LSEY) project demonstrates how communities can work together to provide a coordinated system of services, supports and education that is responsive to children's individual learning needs, abilities and backgrounds.

Why link schools and early years services?

Many Australian children, especially those from disadvantaged communities, start school developmentally vulnerable. However, the challenges of starting school can be overcome by strong links and partnerships between schools, early years services, families and the community.

What are we working towards?

When children start school ready and able to take advantage of all the available learning opportunities, they can get the best start possible.

LSEY communities aim to achieve:

1. Children and families that transition smoothly between early years services and schools.
2. Early years services that actively connect with families.
3. Schools that are responsive to the individual learning needs of all children.

Who are the LSEY communities?

LSEY is happening in three Victorian communities so far: Corio-Norlane in the City of Greater Geelong, Footscray in the City of Maribyrnong and Hastings in the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Find out more about LSEY www.rch.org.au/lsey

The LSEY approach

Linking Schools and Early Years (LSEY) supports communities to rethink the way that early childhood services, schools and other child and family services can work together through developing a community partnership.

The LSEY approach also builds capacity in communities to use local data and consultation information in planning to ensure that the activities build on local strengths and respond to local circumstances.

The community partnership helps early childhood practitioners and services in your community to work together.

LSEY in practice

In practice, the LSEY approach looks different in each community. However, there are some things that have shown to be important in all communities.

These include:

- a shared understanding and agreement
- local relationships and partnerships
- joint planning
- information and practice sharing.

A sustainable and ongoing approach

Keeping LSEY partnerships going has been a key feature of the LSEY project approach and actions.

Sustainability is taking different forms across each community. So far, things that have been important in sustainability planning are strong local relationships, partnership working, leadership and responsiveness.

Each LSEY community is trialling different processes and structures to achieve sustainability.

Evaluation

An external evaluation of the LSEY project is providing Australian evidence of the way that effective local partnerships can support improved service coordination for children and their families.

A report on this evaluation will be available in November 2012 at www.rch.org.au/lsey