

Linking Schools and Early Years (LSEY)

The Linking Schools and Early Years (LSEY) project is developing practice-based evidence to inform policy and community action that will contribute to ensuring every child has the best start in life.

LSEY Project Goals

Children and families make a smooth transition between early years services and school

Early years services and schools actively connect with families

Schools are responsive to the needs of all children

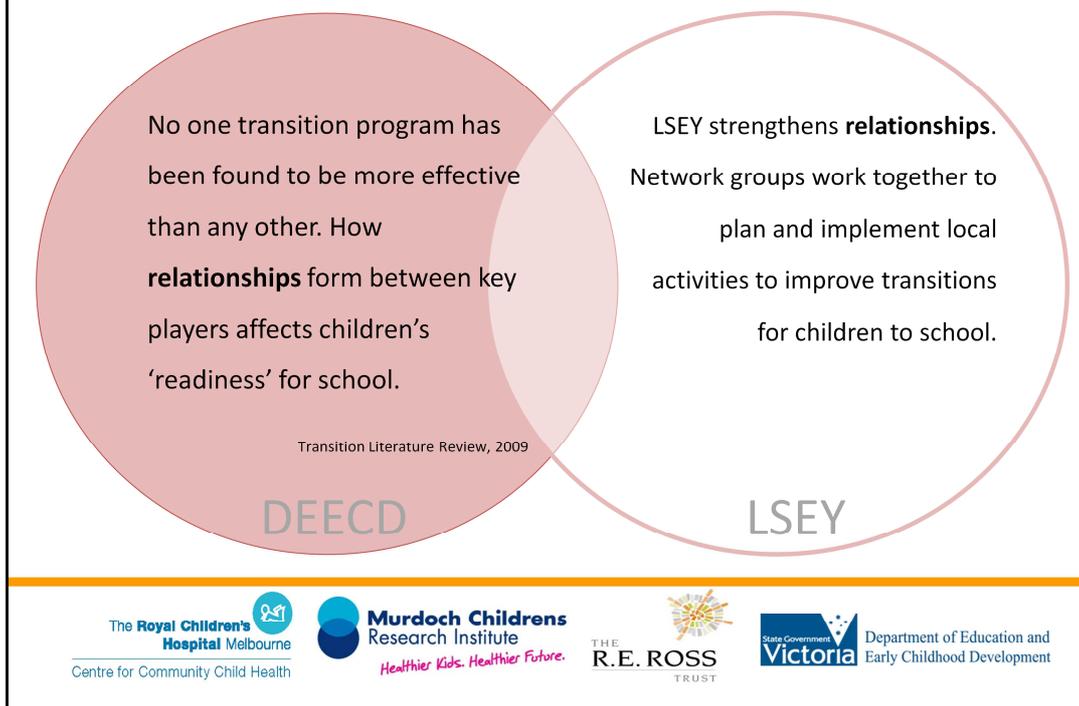
Central to the LSEY **approach** is the development of strong and effective relationships and a community partnership approach to planning, implementing and evaluating activities.



SYNERGIES

Government Strategies	LSEY Project
<p><i>System improvement</i> through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved transitions • Accessible early childhood services • Better planning and coordination • Cross-sectoral strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens relationships and improves collaborative planning and action between communities, families, services, schools • Empowers communities to collectively improve transitions, access to services and engagement of families
<p><i>Strengthen partnerships</i> by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with families and communities • Focusing on parents as partners • Developing place-based approaches • Ensuring diverse needs are met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a platform for a shared understanding of diverse community needs • Develops place-based approaches that are informed by local data and an understanding of identified needs • Provides opportunities for collaborative work between new and existing partners
<p><i>Reforming the workforce</i> through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership development • Building capacity in early childhood services • Professional learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds capacity in early childhood services, schools and communities through strengthening local leadership, shared professional learning activities and collaborative planning and action
VEYLDF	LSEY Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions are a key element • The importance of early childhood professionals working with families and children is highlighted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions and partnerships are key elements, as reflected in the LSEY approach and goals

Best Practice



SYNERGIES

Transition Literature Review Findings

Transition policies and initiatives should:

- Foster the development of partnerships between families and schools and early years services and create opportunities for families to be involved in the transition process.
- Involve engagement strategies between Early Years Services and Schools
- Improve communication to support professionals to build knowledge and skills required to promote a positive transition.

LSEY Project

Project initiatives include:

- Implementation of a range of new measures to improve relationships with parents in each LSEY community, thus targeting the accessibility of services and engagement of parents.
- Network groups that have provided the opportunity to strengthen relationships, and in turn, partnerships between Early Years Services and Schools.
- Peer swaps, which have been effective in building a mutual understanding of others' roles and programs and to share information.

Transition Initiatives



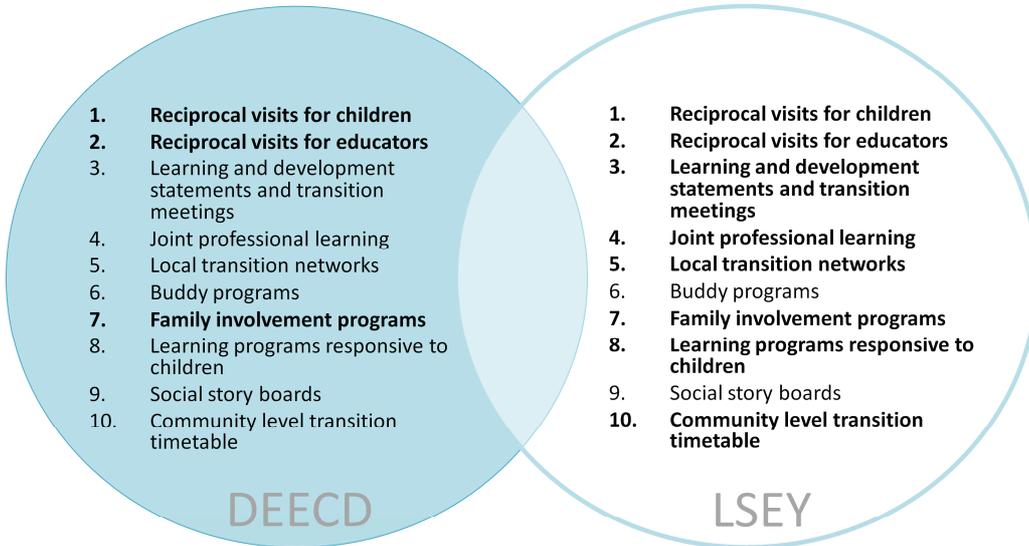
SYNERGIES

Transition: A Positive Start to School

LSEY Project

<p>Transition Pilots Thirty state-funded pilots trialled a range of transition approaches from October 2008 to May 2009. Transition activities, processes, information and resources, relationship-building strategies, professional development programs and the use of transition-to-school statements were all investigated.</p>	<p>All three LSEY project communities were included as pilot sites trialling specific transition activities. The LSEY project continues to provide information about relationship-building strategies, transition activities, processes, information and resources, professional development activities and a partnership approach to using transition-to-school statements.</p>
<p>Transition Learning and Development Statements.</p>	<p>To improve transitions, LSEY communities develop locally relevant processes for collaboratively planning and using the Statements through their partnership approach.</p>
<p>Additional support Transition programs for children from culturally diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds should be individualised.</p>	<p>To meet the diverse needs of children and families, LSEY communities have targeted engagement of local cultural leaders. Professional development about developing meaningful partnerships has been another strategy implemented to work towards achieving active engagement between all families and early years services and schools.</p>

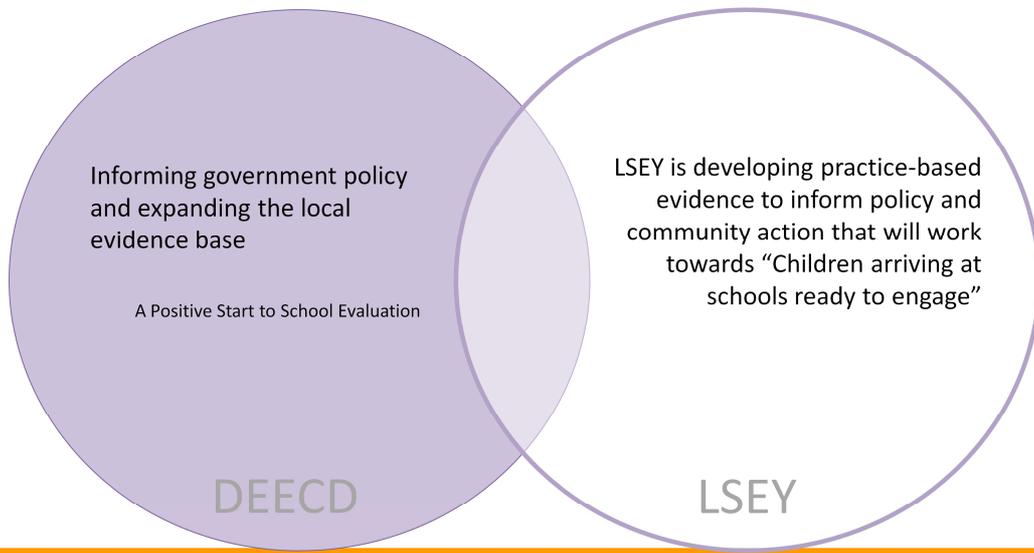
Transition Findings



SYNERGIES

Promising Practices	LSEY Project
Ten 'Promising Practices' were identified in the Transition Evaluation report, with 3 of these practices currently being trialed.	Eight 'Promising Practices' are currently implemented by LSEY communities as activities to assist achievement of project goals.
The Promising Practices will 'work best when delivered as part of a comprehensive and tailored local transition strategy'.	LSEY communities identify, plan and respond collaboratively to the identified needs of children and families in their community.
The overall rationale should encourage better connections, conversations, and relationships between key players in the transition process.	Pivotal to the LSEY approach is investment in building relationships.

Evaluation & Research



SYNERGIES

A Positive Start to School Evaluation

LSEY Project

<p>Enablers to successfully designing and delivering transition programs and activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working collaboratively • Leadership and program champions • Local planning and evaluation • Professional development opportunities • Sustainability planning 	<p>The building of relationships has enabled an understanding of different roles and provided the opportunity for developing new, and strengthening existing, partnerships (LSEY Project Evaluation, 2010).</p> <p>This in turn has led to the implementation of successful transition programs and activities.</p> <p>Strategies for building relationships have included establishment of a practitioner leadership group, 'knowledge bank' partnership structure, joint planning of transition programs and peer swaps.</p>
<p>Transition initiative implementation challenges included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short time frames • Cross sector coordination • Philosophical differences • Workload commitments • Involving children and families 	<p>Strategies LSEY communities have implemented to overcome such challenges, have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-release for practitioners • Incorporating activities into existing workloads • Creating a shared understanding of each others practices to address philosophical differences • Developing consistent practices, which is promoting cross-sector collaboration and coordination • Longer time frames