Preparing for the transition to high school

Lisa Mundy & Elissa Phillips
Fitting in
Homework
Losing friends
New culture
Making friends
Getting lost
Multiple teachers
Public transport
More students
Belonging
Why is this an important time?
School outcomes

Australian NAPLAN scores, 2008 - 2016.

NAPLAN data show that there was little change in student achievement between 2008 – 2016.
Onset of mental health problems

50% (Adapted from Blakemore & Mills, 2013)
What’s happening during the middle years?
The hormonal cascade
What’s happening in the brain?
What’s happening for students in Victoria?
The CATS study
Adjustment to secondary school
School Concerns Questionnaire

- Making new friends
- Being able to do the work
- Getting lost
- Following a timetable
- Homework
- PE
- Break time
Concerns about the transition (girls)
Concerns about the transition (boys)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>-5.46</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>-2.90</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.03</td>
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</table>
Thinking about this child going to high school, do you expect this child to settle in well at high school in the following areas….

Academically

To the new routine

Socially with peers

Socially with teachers

START – Secondary Transition Adjustment Rating Tool
Adjustment to secondary school

Teachers

Parents

Academically | Socially, with peers | Socially, with teachers | To the new routine

Year 6

Academically | Socially, with peers | Socially, with teachers | To the new routine

Year 6 | Year 7
## Anticipated adjustment & NAPLAN performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Parent</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Girls</strong></td>
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<td>0.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Boys</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
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<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
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Workshop Activity 1
Reflect on the processes used at your school around the transition from primary to secondary school.

• What information do you provide to students? to parents?
• What are Primary Schools doing? What are Secondary Schools doing?
• How does this differ among schools?
What are schools doing to support the transition?
Conceptual framework
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Key informant interviews (n=52)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>%/ mean</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P-6 school</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grade 6 teacher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. grade 6 students</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No. destination schools</strong></td>
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</table>
Organisation & administration

- Student mapping tool: 35%
- Written policy: 45%
- Transition committee: 60%
- Meetings with secondary schools: 85%
- Process for transferring info: 95%
Social & personal factors

Orientation day

Class discussions

Info to parents

Visits from high school students

Visits from high school teachers

Buddy system
Curriculum & pedagogy

Joint activities between primary & high school

Timetable changes

Homework changes

Specific classes focused on transition

%
Support received in the transition
Support received

### Parent

- **Primary school**
  - None: 30%
  - A little: 20%
  - Some: 15%
  - A lot: 35%

- **Secondary school**
  - None: 25%
  - A little: 20%
  - Some: 15%
  - A lot: 40%

### Student (parent report)

- **Primary school**
  - None: 10%
  - A little: 30%
  - Some: 40%
  - A lot: 20%

- **Secondary school**
  - None: 0%
  - A little: 10%
  - Some: 30%
  - A lot: 60%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
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<td>SE</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.03</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
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<td><strong>Support from Secondary School</strong></td>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.26</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.25</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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Support received & school adjustment
Workshop Activity 2
How would you set up a buddy (peer-support) programme?

- Who would be responsible for setting up the program? And then for seeing it through into secondary school?
- How would you ensure all students were allocated buddies?
- How would sessions be facilitated, and organised to fit into everyone's schedule?
- What about schools that don’t want to participate?
- Make a plan for the first three buddy sessions – when? where? what?
What can we do?

- Encourage healthy risks
- Provide boundaries
- Encourage creativity
- Facilitate decision making
- Positive encouragement
- Encourage empathy
- Talk about brain changes
Create caring, supportive environments that promote learning & wellbeing

Help students to develop social skills & learn to manage their emotions

Identify students in need of additional support

Link students with info & support services

Develop broader, organisational, school & community strategies to promote wellbeing
A period of vulnerability…

…but also opportunity
Acknowledgements

With thanks to:

• all the families and schools that have taken part in CATS
• the research team & collaborators
• our funding providers & partnering institutions
Thank you

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