Transition into School – Audio Description and Transcript

**Parents and Whānau Hui – Growing and Learning Together with your Deaf Child, brought to you by Ministry of Education, New Zealand Federation for Deaf Children and Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand.**

**A presentation by Mark Douglas, Practice Leader for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Ministry of Education, on ‘Transition into School’ held in a large seminar room in Living Springs, Christchurch.**

**Mark:** My name’s Mark Douglas and I am a, well my role currently is practice leader for Deaf and hard of hearing for the Ministry of Education. In my previous roles I’ve been a teacher, teacher of the deaf and advisor of deaf children. So, it’s a real privilege to be here today and to facilitate this session.

**Interview with Mark commenting on his presentation**

**Mark:** The presentation was about transitioning students into schools. So, what is required in terms of the needs of the child, the strengths of the child and what resources might be available, what the team around the child might look like and what are the good practices involved in a good transition into school.

**Presentation by Mark continued.**

**PowerPoint presentation on ‘Early Planning’. The text on the slide reads: “The whole process started way back near their 4th birthday…what are the school options, meeting with the school teams, what resources may be required, when and how to access resources.**

**Mark:** Early planning, so obviously for this family, the process started when their child turned four and that’ probably a good time to start thinking about transition into school. Each journey will be different for each child and for each family, depending on the strengths and needs of that child prior to going into school. And you need to look at, what are the school options available, what are the placement options within your local area, whether it be the local school, or whether it be a satellite class that maybe sits under a deaf education centre or whether it might be a deaf education centre like a base school or something like that itself.

Meeting with the school teams so once you’ve made a decision on where you want to go then scheduling meetings with the school or the facility that you’re going to. Getting to know who’s there, they get to know you having an understanding of what the needs and strengths are for your child. Then we’ll look at what resources may be required and I’m going to go through that. There’s a raft of resources and they sort of sit on a continuum that are available, depending on the child and the family.

**PowerPoint presentation on ‘Shared understanding about resources’. The text on the slide reads: “Resources come as funding, materials and people. People include specialist skills, experience, people’s time, and professional learning and development”. Next to the the text, there is a picture of a written resource.**

**Mark:** Okay, so resources can be many different things, it can be people, it can be materials and it can also be funding. So there’s sort of three different areas we can look at for resources and depending on the strengths and need of the child will depend on the type of resources that are required to allow them to really benefit in the school environment. It can also be for professional learning and development so we can provide professional and learning development for the team within the school to develop their understanding around what the needs and the strengths of the child are as well.

**PowerPoint presentation on ‘Some resources available’. The text on the slide reads: Special Education Grant, Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS), Advisor on Deaf Children (AoDC), Resource Teacher: Deaf (RTD), New Zealand Sign Laguage@school, Assertive Technology – DM Sytems.**

**Mark:** So, the first two resources are funding resources which you may or may not have heard of. So each school has a special education grant and your child is allocated funding as they go into the school and, correct me if I’m wrong, depending on the decile ranking of the school will determine the amount of the special education grant that goes in with your child. Then there’s the ongoing resources scheme and the ongoing resources scheme is targeted funding. What that means is, the child is identified as having needs that may follow them all the way through school. And then there’s what we call specialist funding and most of that funding sits within the Ministry of Education and that gives the family and the school access to practitioners such as advisors on deaf children like Sue, speech language therapists if they’re required, occupational therapists, physical therapists. So there’s a raft of specialists available if they’re required to assist with that process and supporting that child in school.

There’s also a new initiative that’s just starting to roll out across the country now called New Zealand Sign Language at school and that initiative is funding that sits over and above the ongoing resourcing scheme funding and that’s for students who require New Zealand Sign Language to access the curriculum. And then there’s the assistive technology which some of you may be aware of already, FM systems or DM Systems as they’re now called and any other assistive technology that might be required.

So once that child is in school, it’s really important that we monitor that transition into school and make sure that what was required for that child to be engaged with the classroom setting and to be able to access the curriculum and to feel, you know, happy basically in the school environment is happening and the way we do that can either be through informal or formal monitoring.

**PowerPoint Presentaion on ‘Monioring’. The text on the slide reads: Once transition into school is completed a process is set up for informal and formal monitoring in the school setting: teacher parent meetings; team meetings – parent/whanau, Advisor on Deaf Children (AoDC), Resource Teacher: Deaf (RTD); individual education plan meetings.**

**Mark:** Obviously families talking to the teacher is probably the first port of call, talking with your child to see how they feel, are things going okay, teacher parent meetings and team meetings or what we call individual education plan meetings as well may be required if there are practitioners involved like a resource teacher of the deaf or a teacher aid or so on and so forth so a plan is developed and reviewed on a regular basis.

**Interview with Kate Whale, President, NZ Federation for Deaf Children.**

**Kate:** I was a panel member on the Transition into Schools workshop which is something I’m quite passionate about. We’ve been through, just in the last few years, that whole transition and it’s terrifying so I’m really, really passionate about giving parents the most information that they need to make that transition easier both on themselves, on the kids and on the school involved. I think my summary for transitioning into school is that the parents are, I’ve heard it said, the ‘Team Leader’, and you have to be. You have to be that constant presence. You can’t ever step back and think that somebody else will do it because nobody knows your child like you do. You are the one that knows that child, you are the one that knows what they need, how they behave, what freaks them out, what do they love doing. You are that person and nobody is more professional than you when it comes to your child.

**Ryan, parent, comments on transitioning into school.**

**Ryan (signing):** Many of the other parents commented that transitioning to school was very difficult. There are issues with funding. Lot’s of them reported difficulties with accessing services such as advisor of Deaf children services, teacher of the Deaf services, being unsure of where to turn, or who to listen to. It can be overwhelming. So I think it is important that parents, such as myself understand what to do and where to go. So listening to other parents today was interesting to better understand some of the answers to these questions.

**Interview with Kate continued.**

**Kate:** So when you have school visits, make sure that everybody’s involved, everybody knows. The school visit’s like a sort of taste test for going into school and that’s where your child will make their opinions known on whether they like school, whether they think school’s going to be great or whether this transition’s going to be painful and hideous and awful.

**Interview with Mark continued, commenting on the Workshop**

**Mark:** The ultimate outcome for me would be families and caregivers and whanau who are confident in their ability to lead that process around transition into school so they feel confident to be able to ask the questions that need to be asked, confident that the resources will be there if they’re required and confident in their conversations with the schools in terms of having high expectations for their child, that it’s going to be a successful process and also confident to speak up when things aren’t going right and finally, and it’s something that’s actually come out of today has been, confident that they have access to people like advisors on deaf children and access to accurate and up to date information.

**PowerPoint on Top Tips for ‘Introduction into NZSL’.**

**Top Tips:**

* **Talk to your child about school.**
* **Start the transition process with the team around you and your child at least six months before your child starts school.**
* **Use your Advisor on Deaf Children (AoDC) as a key way to get up to date information and to navigate through the resources and support.**
* **Advocate for your child – hold high expectations of your child and also of your school, speal up if things are not going right.**
* **Keep talking – we take a team approach – be the team leader – focus on the strengths as well as needs – ask questions.**

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