

Foreword

The first years of life lay the foundations for an individual's future skills development and learning. As previous *Starting Strong* reports have shown, investments in high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) pay dividends in terms of children's long-term learning and development. Many OECD countries recognise this, and have increased public spending on ECEC in recent years. However, a growing body of research suggests that the benefits can disappear during the first years of primary school if the transitions between ECEC and primary schooling are not well-prepared, or if continuity in quality is not ensured in primary education.

For many children, the transition from the last period of early childhood education to the start of primary school is their first experience of a big cultural change – in the people surrounding them, the ways in which they interact, their number of peers, the types of activities they are engaged in, and their physical surroundings. A successful experience at this stage is likely to influence whether or not they can develop their full potential, and their ability to cope with future transitions.

The political and social attention on transitions in early learning has increased over the past decade in many countries. This fifth report in the OECD's *Starting Strong* series aims to build a consolidated international knowledge base on effective strategies and policies to ensure continuity in children's learning and well-being environments between ECEC and primary education. It offers a state-of-the-art summary of the latest research and thinking on transitions, and draws on surveys of OECD and partner countries to establish where countries are in ensuring coherence in transition governance, professional continuity, curriculum and pedagogical continuity, and developmental continuity. The report concludes by drawing out six key cross-cutting policy pointers to guide and inspire policy makers aiming to ensure successful transitions in their countries or jurisdictions.

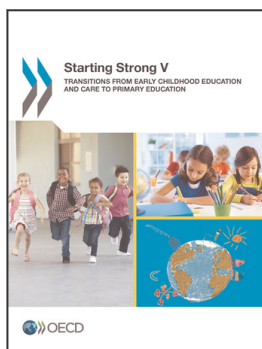
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Information on the OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care is available at: www.oecd.org/edu/earlychildhood.



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