

# Action Research Report: Designing and Implementing the Transition Capability Pathway – Waikato and Bay of Plenty

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Date: October 2024

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**Project Overview:** To develop a robust and co-designed transition capability pathway that supports ākongā transitioning between educational stages, particularly those with learning disabilities and Down syndrome.

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## Section 1: Introduction

### Introduction: Transition as a Critical Capability for Independence

Transitions, whether within a school or between educational environments, are pivotal in shaping a student's educational trajectory and future success. The ability to transition smoothly is not merely logistical but reflects a critical capability that involves resilience, adaptability, and social-emotional readiness. Transitions, when well-managed, promote independence, self-efficacy, and engagement. According to the systematic review published by *Frontiers in Psychology* (2018), successful school transitions contribute significantly to ākongā' long-term academic success and social well-being.

Transition as a Capability requires not only academic preparation but also fostering social-emotional development, particularly in ākongā with additional learning needs. Spernes (2022) underscores the complexity of transition, highlighting that ākongā often face social and emotional challenges that can hinder their adjustment if not addressed. Similarly, Selina McCoy, Michael Shevlin, and Richard Rose (2020) found that for ākongā with SEN, the transition to secondary school is often fraught with additional challenges, including the loss of familiar support systems and difficulties adapting to new environments. These challenges make it crucial for schools to implement intentional, structured transition programs.

Positive School Transition Readiness (PSTR) also plays a significant role in the successful transition of ākongā. The Preliminary Development and Validation of the Positive School Transition Readiness Survey (Bharara & Duncan, 2021) highlights that ākongā who display higher transition readiness, including emotional and social skills, are more likely to navigate these changes effectively. Schools can foster this readiness through targeted interventions that build ākongā' self-management and coping skills.

Successful transitions require a few key elements. Early preparation is essential, with planning starting well ahead of the transition period. Clearly defined roles for support staff, including teacher aides, specialists, and peer mentors, ensuring that each person knows their part in the process. Using student profiles, combined with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, helps to address individual transition needs by accommodating different learning styles. Finally, fostering a culture of high expectations, where competence is assumed and regularly reinforced with feedback and encouragement, empowers ākongā to reach their full potential during the transition.

## Transition as a Critical Skill for Independence

Transitions, whether they occur within a school or as ākonga move to a new educational environment, represent pivotal moments in a student's journey. Well-managed transitions provide the structure and support necessary to develop independence, resilience, and adaptability in ākonga, particularly those with additional learning needs.

## Purpose of the Transition Capability Pathway Network of Expertise Project

### **Vision**

- To foster intentional transition programmes for ākonga from one setting to another, in collaboration with whānau and schools.
- Develop, support and enhance ākonga to independently navigate their world - acknowledging where they are from, where they stand, and where they are going.

### **Provision**

- A context for setting the design of learning opportunities within school transitions(horizontal) and the design of year level, vertical transition through the school years.
- A pathway of effective collective teaching practices in our region to address how we work better with each other across transitions at each phase of learning.

### **Action**

- To help develop an intentional transition programme.
- To shape the collaborative design and implementation of rich learning opportunities that support learning continuity and hauora for ākonga within all transitions.

## Transition Capability Pathway Aims

- **Build teacher – teacher capability**
- **Foster Independence:** Equip ākonga with the skills to navigate educational transitions independently.
- **Provide Tailored Support:** Offer differentiated support for ākonga, especially those with learning disabilities and Down syndrome.
- **Promote Consistency Across Schools:** Ensure uniform transition practices across schools within the Waihi region.

## The Importance of Transition as a Life Skill

Successful transitions are integral to a student's overall development. They foster not only academic continuity but also the development of critical life skills such as problem-solving, self-management, and social-emotional resilience. This report outlines the steps involved in implementing the **Transition Capability Pathway** and the theoretical underpinnings behind these efforts.

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## Section 2: Research Background

### Transition as a Capability for Independence

Research shows that transitions require careful planning and support. Ākonga who receive targeted interventions during these periods are better prepared to meet the demands of new environments. According to Bharara & Duncan (2021), Positive School Transition Readiness (PSTR) helps ākonga build emotional and social readiness, both of which are key predictors of successful transitions.

For ākonga with additional learning needs, transitions can be especially challenging. Studies by Spernes (2022) and McCoy et al. (2020) highlight the social and emotional difficulties ākonga with additional learning needs face during transitions. Therefore, it is critical that schools implement structured, intentional transition programmes that are flexible and responsive to individual student needs.

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### Universal Design for Learning (UDL): A Framework for Supporting All Ākonga

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework promotes flexible teaching methods that accommodate diverse learning needs by providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression. By designing lessons with UDL principles, educators can create inclusive learning environments that reduce barriers, offer personalized support, and ensure all students, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, have equal opportunities to succeed.

- **Engagement:** Provide multiple ways to motivate and engage learners, such as offering choices, fostering collaboration, and connecting learning to real-world contexts.
- **Representation:** Present information in various formats—visual, auditory, or tactile—so students can access content in ways that suit their individual needs.
- **Action and Expression:** Allow students to demonstrate their learning through different methods, including writing, speaking, or using technology, to best express their understanding.

### Transition as a Life Skill for Independence

The second factor to recognise is that transition is a capability that builds independence. The experience of transition from one educational stage to another, particularly from primary to secondary school, is a critical developmental period for ākonga. Research by **McCoy et al. (2020)** emphasises the unique challenges faced by ākonga with additional learning needs during this period. These challenges include adjusting to new social environments, navigating increased academic demands, and managing the expectations of multiple teachers. Schools must develop clear and structured transition processes to support these ākonga through such periods of upheaval. There are positive gains of an intentional process or school wide actions of transition, three examples are shown below as outcomes substantiated in the research literature.

- **Positive School Transition Readiness (PSTR):** According to Bharara & Duncan (2021), ākonga who are emotionally and socially prepared for the transition to secondary school display higher resilience, confidence, and academic engagement. This readiness can be developed

through early interventions that focus on building social skills, self-regulation, and independence.

- **Strong, Intentional Pathways:** Schools must intentionally design transition pathways that foster student independence. Research from RaisingChildren.net.au (2022) notes the importance of clear communication, regular orientation sessions, and peer mentorship programs to support ākongā as they adapt to new environments.
  - **Assumed Competence and High Expectations:** When schools and educators assume competence and set high expectations for ākongā with special needs, they often rise to meet those expectations, gaining confidence and a greater sense of self-efficacy. McCoy et al. (2020) also argue that fostering positive relationships between ākongā and teachers is crucial in enabling smoother transitions.
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## Supporting Ākongā With Additional Learning Needs During Transition

Ākongā with additional learning needs often require additional support during transitions. Research shows that schools that employ Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and involve allied professionals in the transition process see better outcomes for the range of ākongā with diverse range of additional learning needs. According to McCoy et al. (2020), effective collaboration between educators, families, whānau, and allied professionals (such as speech-language therapists and counsellors) can mitigate many of the difficulties faced by ākongā with additional learning needs during transitions. The positive gains of an intentional process within the school wide actions of transition are acknowledged, two examples are shown below as outcomes substantiated in the research literature.

- **Individualised Transition Plans:** Schools should develop tailored plans for ākongā with SEN, focusing on their strengths, needs, and any additional supports required. This includes using tools like **social stories**, peer support systems, and regular family, whānau communication to ensure a smooth transition (McCoy et al., 2020).
- **Visible Processes:** The **Knowledge Base (2022)** emphasises the need for transparency and visibility in the transition process. Ākongā benefit when they can clearly see and understand each step of the transition, from classroom visits to regular communication with their new teachers.

The systematic literature review conducted by Bharara (2020) critically examines the factors contributing to a successful transition from primary to secondary education. The review draws on a comprehensive range of empirical studies, incorporating quantitative research from OECD countries for youth aged 10 to 15 years. The focus was on transition and exclusion criteria included specific student population groups such as by programme based, ethnicity or ability (gifted or learning needs). A thorough search of academic databases was employed to identify relevant studies, focusing on key transition factors such as student wellbeing, academic achievement, teacher-student relationships, and parental involvement. The review synthesises a total of 555 results of which findings from 22 studies, which include longitudinal and cross-sectional designs, thereby offering a broad and in-depth analysis of the transition process.

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The scope of the data includes regional and international studies, enabling the review to present a holistic view of transition practices across different educational systems. Common themes identified in the data include the importance of early intervention, structured support programs, and peer relationships, all of which contribute significantly to the ease of transition for students. The review emphasizes the need for tailored approaches, particularly for students at risk of disengagement, and the importance of fostering positive social and emotional environments within schools. These findings highlight critical areas for future research and provide valuable insights for New Zealand educators seeking to improve transition practices.

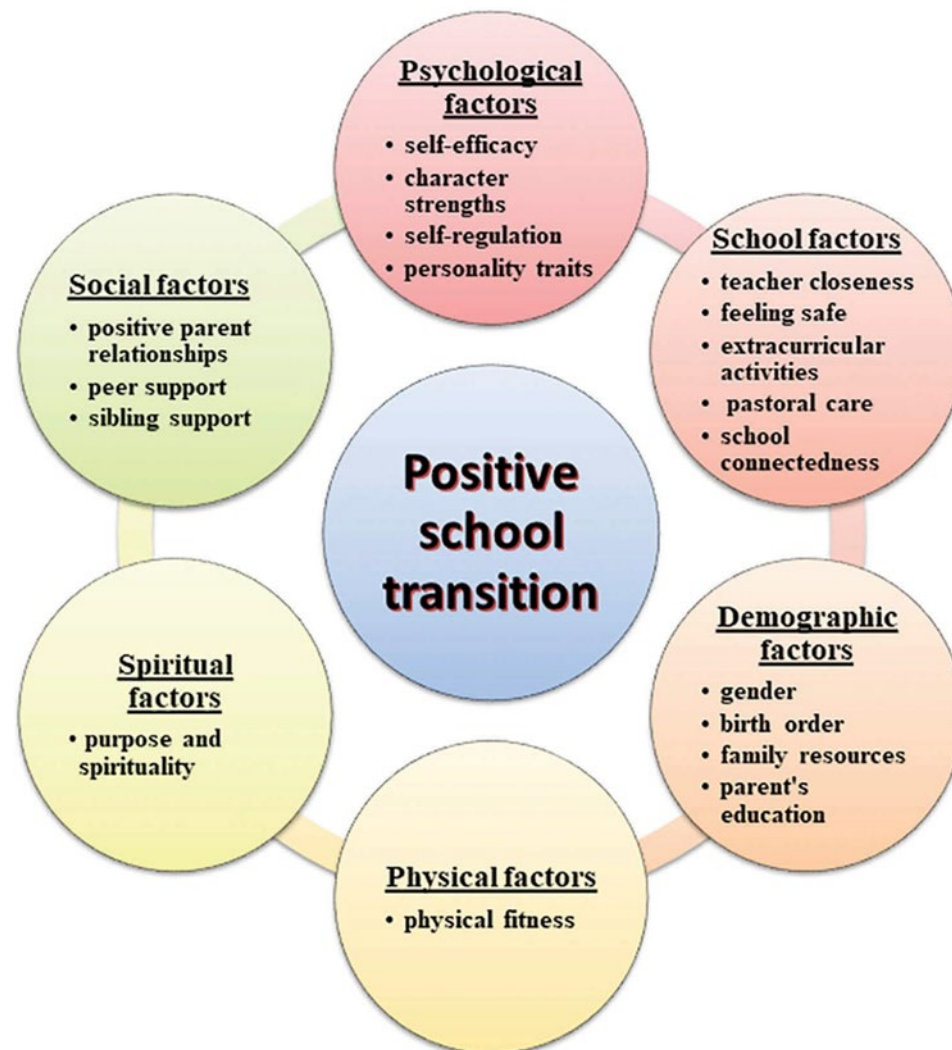


Figure 1. Factors influencing a positive transition to secondary school based on the literature review Bharara (2020).

The model from the New Zealand literature review provides a starting point for comprehensive consideration. The volume and variety of data analysed in this review ensure that it provides a robust and evidence-based discussion on how to enhance the secondary school transition experience for students.

## Summary from Theory to Practice: Practical Steps for Successful Transitions

To ensure students transitions, schools must adopt intentional practices that build independence, foster emotional resilience, and engage ākongā in their own learning process. The systematic review published in *Frontiers in Education* (2021) and Bharara (2020), provide ample evidence that schools with structured transition programmes, which incorporate family, whānau involvement and peer support, show greater ākongā during transitions. These programmes reduce anxiety, increase ākongā engagement, and improve academic outcomes.

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## Section 3: Methodology and Approach

### Action Research Approach

This project uses an **action research framework** to implement the **Transition Capability Pathway**. Action research is a reflective process in which schools and teachers collaboratively engage in cycles of **planning, acting, observing, and reflecting** on transition processes.

### Methodology: Action Research in Transition Capability Pathway

This research uses an action research framework, involving iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on the transition processes. The focus is on engaging educators, families, whānau and ākongā in developing and implementing the Transition Capability Pathway.

#### 1. Planning stage – Co- design

The first stage of action research, often referred to as the planning stage or "diagnosing" phase, is critical for building knowledge. In this phase, the researcher collaborates with participants, typically practitioners, to identify and understand a specific problem or area requiring change or improvement. The primary goal is to develop a clear, shared understanding of the issue by gathering initial data, reviewing relevant literature, and forming hypotheses or guiding questions that direct future action.

In this research, the initial stage involved introducing core concepts and bridging theory with practice through the co-design of an aligned, fragment-based approach to transition. This approach was incorporated into the framework of the Capability Transition Pathway and included professional development practices. The process was highly collaborative, involving seventeen key representatives from both primary and secondary schools across the three Kāhui Ako in the Waihi and Hauraki regions. These interactive sessions were aimed at collaboratively exploring and refining transition strategies, ensuring their practical relevance and alignment with local educational needs and contexts.

#### 2. Data Collection Methods:

##### 1. Focus Group Interactive Workshop Series Capability Transition Pathway Co-Design

2. **Surveys and Questionnaires:** Distributed to students, families, and teachers to assess perceptions of readiness and independence during transitions.
3. **Focus Group Discussions at school level:** Conducted with educators, SENCOs, LSCs, whānau, students, students with additional learning needs, and allied professionals to gather insights on effective transition practices.
4. **Observation and Reflection:** Classroom observations during transition periods to assess student engagement, emotional readiness, and the use of UDL strategies.
5. **Kāhui Ako led Focus Group:** Conducted with educators, SENCOs, LSCs, teachers across Kāhui Ako and ECE including PLD and discussion on Capability Transition Pathway within school Year 3 and Year 4, Year 5 and Year 5, to school ECE to primary school, and from primary to secondary school.

**Timeframe:**

1. **Focus Group Interactive Workshop Series Capability Transition Pathway Co-Design including Focus group discussion at school level:** 12 months
2. **Surveys and Questionnaires:** 12 months
3. **Observation and Reflection:** 12 months and ongoing
4. **Kāhui Ako led Focus Group:** 24 months monthly meeting and 6 PLD Hui per annum which are ongoing across 5 Kāhui Ako as at September 2024.

**Participants:**

- **Students:** Year 3 and Year 4 students, students Year 5 and Year 6 students with a focus on those identified as having need for support or additional learning needs.
- **Educators:** Teachers, SENCOs, ASLs, and support staff involved in transition planning and execution.
- **Families:** Parents, whānau and caregivers who are integral to the transition process.

### 3. Implementing the Transition Capability Pathway

#### 1. UDL Approach: Supporting All Students, Including ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** provided a flexible, inclusive approach that benefited all students, including those with ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS. By offering multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression, UDL strategies helped students navigate the complexities of transitions with increased independence.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research-based educational framework designed to benefit all ākonga, including those with additional learning needs. UDL aims to provide flexible learning environments that accommodate individual learning differences and promote inclusivity by offering multiple means of engagement, representation, and action/expression.

Implementing UDL during transitions ensures that all ākonga, regardless of their learning needs, have equitable access to the curriculum and the supports necessary for success. Coyne et al. (2020)

highlight the importance of UDL in creating environments that are adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of learners.

- **Engagement:** UDL supports various ways to engage ākonga by providing different options for motivation, reducing barriers to participation, and fostering autonomy. In the context of transitions, this might include offering personalised learning goals and incorporating peer support programs that help build social connections.
- **Representation:** By presenting information in different formats (e.g., visual, auditory, and kinesthetic), UDL ensures that all ākonga, especially those with additional learning needs, can access and process information effectively. Visual schedules, social stories, and interactive tools are particularly helpful for supporting ākonga during transitions.
- **Action and Expression:** UDL encourages the use of multiple means for ākonga to express their learning, including speech, writing, art, or digital media. This flexibility allows ākonga to communicate their progress during transitions in a way that feels comfortable and empowering for them.

## Participants

This action research involved the following participants:

- **Ākonga:** Year 6 and Year 8 ākonga, and an additional focus on those identified as having additional learning needs transferring from the primary schools to the region's secondary schools.
- **Ākonga:** Year 3 and Year 4 ākonga, with a focus on those identified as having sensory or additional learning needs.
- **Educators:** Teachers, SENCOs, Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs), and teacher aides responsible for transition planning and implementation.
- **Families:** Parents, whānau and caregivers who play a crucial role in supporting their children through transitions.
- **PLD provider:** NEX hui PLD, ASL PLD teacher to teacher Hui, Traveller programme provider.

## Data Collection Methods

- **Surveys and Questionnaires:** Administered to ākonga, teachers, and parents to assess perceptions of transition readiness.
  - **Focus Groups:** Discussions with SENCOs, teachers, and allied professionals to gather qualitative insights into transition practices.
  - **Observations:** Observations of classroom interactions during transitions, noting emotional readiness, engagement, and the use of UDL strategies.
  - **Student Self-Assessments:** Tools for ākonga to reflect on their transition experiences, set goals, and track their progress.
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## Section 4: Key Components of the Transition Capability Pathway

### 1. Scaffolded Independence: Building Skills Over Time

Developing student independence is central to the **Transition Capability Pathway**. The focus is on gradually scaffolding ākongā' experiences and responsibilities, ensuring that they are well-prepared to face new challenges.

#### Steps for Scaffolded Independence

- **Step-by-Step Skill Development:** Teachers provide clear expectations and gradually increase the complexity of tasks. For example, Year 3 ākongā begin with simple tasks such as organising their materials, which progress to more complex responsibilities in Year 4, such as managing their homework schedules independently.
- **Goal Setting:** Ākongā set personal goals that focus on independence, such as “complete tasks without teacher reminders” or “ask a peer for help before asking an adult.”
- **Visual and Verbal Cues:** The use of visual schedules, charts, and verbal cues supports ākongā in managing their own routines.

### Case Study: Year 6 OR Year 8 Transition to Secondary

#### The Importance of Transition as a Life Skill – Primary to Secondary School

Transitions represent both horizontal (within the school environment) and vertical (through the school years) shifts that require structured support and intentional strategies to develop independence in students. These steps include creating personalized plans, engaging learners through scaffolded processes, and regularly communicating with families and support staff.

#### Intentional Practices to Foster Independence

- **Strong Pathways:** Establish intentional and well-planned transition pathways that promote independence, especially for students with learning challenges.
- **Reverse Transition:** This approach increases student interaction with their new environment and prepares them by working backward from their final goals.
- **Engaging Learners:** Ensure that each transition activity is purposeful, engaging, and helps students build the skills they need for future independence.

#### Visible Processes and Strategies

By making the transition process visible and transparent for students, staff, and families, whānau, schools can reduce anxiety and improve ākongā outcomes. The use of clear plans, communication protocols, and regular reviews ensures everyone involved in the transition is on the same page.

#### Key Elements for Successful Transitions:

- **Early Preparation:** Start planning transitions early in the school year.
- **Support Staff Roles:** Clearly define the roles of teacher aides, specialists, and peer mentors.
- **Student Profiles and Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** Use student profiles to map out transition needs and apply UDL principles to support varied learning styles.

- **High Expectations and Assumed Competence:** Foster a culture of high expectations where competence is assumed and supported through regular feedback and encouragement.

## The importance of transitions as a critical step towards developing independence in students.

### **1. Kāhui Ako / Secondary School Group Planning and Implementation: 2023/4 Transition Strategy**

**Objective: To build capability across schools for a structured, school-wide transition programme. This will focus on transitions within schools and from ECE to primary school.**

#### **Actions:**

Identify key Kāhui Ako or Secondary School roles: Within-school leaders (WSLs), across-school leaders (ASLs), and principals will take ownership of transition planning and implementation.

Transition planning across and within schools: Set clear timelines for transition stages from ECE to primary and across year levels within schools.

School-wide IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings: Schedule IEP meetings at the start of the academic year and ensure they are integrated across the school and or Kāhui Ako communities.

Extracurricular activities coordination: Develop a structured approach for extracurricular activities across the year to ensure smooth transition periods.

Intentional transition programmes: Design school-wide transition programmes with specific attention to students requiring additional support.

### **2. Transition Capability Pathway Design: Effective Partnerships and Communication**

**Objective: Develop a co-designed transition programme through collaboration between schools, families, and students to ensure a shared approach.**

#### **Actions:**

Collaborate on tools: Co-design transition tools and select key strategies that work for the school and families.

Establish effective communication methods: Both formal and informal, ensuring key stakeholders are informed well in advance, including setting IEP meeting dates.

Develop student profiles/vision statements: Each student's transition plan should include a clear profile and vision for their educational journey.

Ensure high expectations for student independence: Transition programmes should promote independence, focusing on intentional learning pathways.

### **3. Transition Process: Collaboration, Roles, and Feedback**

**Objective: Clearly define team roles, responsibilities, and communication pathways.**

#### **Actions:**

Identify the transition team: Include WSLs, ASLs, teachers, SENCOs, families, and specialists in the process.

Clarify roles and responsibilities: Schools, families, and allied professionals should have well-defined roles to support the transition process.

Communication protocols: Maintain regular feedback loops, ensuring open communication between schools and families.

#### **4. Intentional Transition Programme for Region: Vision and Pathway Design**

**Objective: Create a clear vision and pathway to support transitions for students, particularly those with additional needs.**

**Actions:**

Develop a Transition Vision Statement: Ensure it aligns with the school's principles and charter. This vision will guide the pathway design and clarify support requirements.

Student profile integration: Ensure each student's profile reflects their strengths, needs, and intended learning pathways.

#### **5. Transition Programme Implementation: School-Wide and Individual Plans**

**Objective: Ensure consistency in transition programmes and tools used across schools.**

**Actions:**

School-wide transition programme: Develop for key stages such as Year 6 and beyond.

Consistent use of tools: Implement templates for communication, checklists, school visits, and meaningful resources to support transitions.

Ongoing review: Regularly review and adapt the transition pathway as needed to address any gaps.

#### **6. Core Elements for Student Success in Transitions**

**Objective: Ensure successful transitions by focusing on student independence and engagement.**

**Actions:**

Build in gradual transition steps: Use natural supports to allow students to practice independence.

Promote self-advocacy: Encourage students to seek peer assistance and develop their own strategies for problem-solving.

Tailored communication methods: Offer multiple ways for students to communicate and engage in new environments.

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### **Summary of Core Action Points**

Capability building across 3 Kāhui Ako: Involve school leaders and teachers in strategic planning for transitions 2022- 2024.

Effective partnerships: Schools, families, and allied professionals will work together to co-design a transition pathway.

Communication protocols: Ensure formal and informal communication is clear, scheduled, and consistent across all stakeholders.

Student-centered transitions: Focus on high expectations and promoting independence for students, with clear, tailored transition pathways.

Regular feedback and reviews: Ongoing reflection and adaptation of the transition process will ensure effectiveness and responsiveness to students' needs.

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Seventeen key staff attended NEX **Interactive Capability Transition Pathway Co- Design series**. The action plan outlines the steps from working with the Network of Expertise in the Waihi, Hauraki region including three secondary schools, LSC and RTLB role.

The role of the **Across School Lead within the Kāhui Ako** was crucial to the Transition Capability Pathway Success ensuring the co-design plan elements became actions into a cohesive plan.

The action plan research includes intentional strategies to enhance and ensure successful school transitions for ākongā, particularly those with additional needs Building capability across schools, collaborating effectively, and maintaining high expectations will support positive student outcomes during transitions in 2022- 2024.

**Key finding:** the variation in the Capability Transition Pathway across the three secondary schools has been reliant on educators' consideration and implementation of the Pathway.

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## Case Study: Year 3 to Year 4 Transition

During the transition from Year 3 to Year 4, ākongā participated in a **peer mentoring program** where older ākongā modelled independence strategies. These included strategies for self-management, problem-solving, and goal setting, allowing younger ākongā to observe and practice these skills in real time.

### Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Inclusive Practices for All

UDL principles were embedded in the transition processes to ensure that every student had access to the support they needed. UDL provided flexible pathways for ākongā to engage with new learning environments, represent their understanding, and express their learning.

#### UDL in Action: Case Study

- **Engagement:** Ākongā were offered choices in how they participated in transition activities, such as choosing between completing a written task or demonstrating their understanding verbally.
- **Representation:** Teachers used multiple formats (videos, infographics, and hands-on activities) to introduce ākongā to new routines and expectations.
- **Action and Expression:** Ākongā could express their understanding in various ways, including drawings, verbal presentations, or written reflections.

### 3. Individualised Transition Plans for Ākongā with Additional learning needs

For ākonga with additional learning needs, individualised transition plans were developed. These plans outlined specific strategies and supports to address each student's unique needs.

### Components of Individualised Transition Plans

- **Social Stories:** Customised narratives that explain new routines or social situations to help ākonga with SEN anticipate changes.
  - **Student Profiles:** Detailed profiles were created for each student, outlining their strengths, areas of challenge, and the supports they would need to succeed in the transition.
  - **Peer Support Systems:** SEN ākonga were paired with peers who offered guidance and emotional support during transitions.
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## Section 5: Transition Process within School: Lessons from Year 3 and Year 4 Ākonga

The **Year 3 to Year 4 Transition** was a key focus in building ākonga independence. This transition represented an opportunity for ākonga to take on new responsibilities, develop self-regulation skills, and engage with more complex learning tasks.

### Key Strategies for Year 3 to Year 4 Transitions

- **Teacher PLD Hui: undertaken by the Across School lead is a key driver in this success**
- **Gradual Increase in Responsibility:** Tasks were scaffolded over time to help ākonga build the skills needed for greater independence in Year 4.
- **Self-Regulation Practices:** Ākonga were taught how to manage their time, monitor their progress, and set personal goals for the upcoming year.
- **Collaborative Learning:** Group projects and peer-led activities encouraged ākonga to work together and take ownership of their learning.

### Outcome: Increased Student Confidence and Independence

Ākonga reported higher levels of confidence in managing their responsibilities as they transitioned from Year 3 to Year 4. Teachers also noted improvements in ākonga's ability to work independently, solve problems without adult assistance, and collaborate with peers.

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## Section 6: Key Resources for the Transition Capability Pathway

### 1. Visual and Verbal Supports

Ākonga benefited greatly from visual and verbal supports that helped clarify expectations and routines during transitions.

#### Examples of Visual and Verbal Supports

- **Social Stories:** Used for SEN ākonga to explain new routines and environments.

- **Visual Schedules:** Daily schedules were posted in classrooms, allowing ākongā to see the sequence of activities for the day.
- **Classroom Charts:** Charts showing classroom responsibilities, peer support roles, and daily tasks helped ākongā understand what was expected of them.

## 2. Peer Support Systems

The peer support system allowed ākongā to learn from one another, with older ākongā modeling independent learning strategies for younger peers.

### Case Study: Peer Mentorship in Year 3 and Year 4

In this mentorship program, Year 4 ākongā were assigned as “transition buddies” to Year 3 ākongā. The older ākongā helped their younger peers navigate classroom routines, solve problems, and prepare for the challenges they would face in Year 4.

## 3. Individualised Learning Tools for Ākongā

For ākongā with additional learning needs, specialised tools such as assistive technologies and personalised learning materials were provided to ensure that they could fully participate in the transition process.

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## Section 7: Progress Monitoring and Feedback

Monitoring student progress was an integral part of the **Transition Capability Pathway**. Progress tracking was conducted through a combination of regular teacher observations, student self-assessments, and parent feedback.

### Methods for Monitoring Progress

- **IEP Reviews:** For ākongā with SEN, regular IEP reviews ensured that transition goals were being met and that any necessary adjustments could be made.
- **Teacher Observations:** Teachers tracked ākongā’ engagement, independence, and problem-solving skills through weekly observation forms.
- **Parent Feedback:** Parents were asked to provide feedback on how their children were adjusting to new routines and responsibilities.
- **ASL PLD Hui**

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## Section 8: Professional Development and Leadership

### Professional Development for Staff

To ensure the successful implementation of the **Transition Capability Pathway**, professional development sessions were held for teachers and support staff. These sessions focused on inclusive practices, trauma-informed approaches, and UDL strategies.

### Leadership Roles in Transition Planning

- **Across School Leaders (ASLs):** Led the Transition Capability Pathway and the PLD

- **Within-School Leaders (WSLs):** Led the transition efforts within each school and coordinated activities across year levels.
  - **SENCOs and LSCs:** Provided specialised support for ākongā with SEN, ensuring that individualised transition plans were in place and monitored. This varied across schools and by practitioner skill set.
  - **Peer Mentors:** Year 4 ākongā took on leadership roles in supporting their younger peers during transitions.
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## Section 9: Reflections and Next Steps

### Reflections on the Transition Capability Pathway

The **Transition Capability Pathway** has provided ākongā with a structured, supportive framework to navigate transitions successfully. The focus on independence, collaboration, and tailored support has been particularly beneficial for ākongā with SEN.

#### Next Steps for Implementation

1. **Expand Peer Mentorship Programs:** Based on the success of the Year 3 to Year 4 mentorship model, peer mentorship will be expanded to other year levels.
  2. **Increase Family, whānau Engagement:** Plans are underway to involve families, whānau more deeply in the transition process, particularly through parent workshops and regular feedback sessions.
  3. **Ongoing Professional Development:** Continued training will be provided to teachers on UDL practices, inclusive pedagogy, and trauma-informed approaches to transitions.
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## Section 10: Conclusion

The **Transition Capability Pathway** has proven to be a comprehensive and effective framework for managing student transitions in the Waihi region. By fostering independence, supporting students with learning support needs and all ākongā to develop self-esteem and settle into environments, and using UDL principles, schools have been able to create a consistent, inclusive transition process that promotes student success.

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