EDITORIAL

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In this seventh volume of the *International Journal of Transitions in Childhood*, there is a strong focus on the voice of children as they make the transition to primary school. As we seek and listen to children’s perspectives about their experiences and as we reflect and carefully analyse what children do and say, our understanding of transitions increases. As noted in these papers, the further outcome should be that practitioners in preschool and schools use these understandings to support children as they negotiate and mark the border crossings associated with transitions to school and how children respond to the changing landscape. One paper reports observations and interviews not only with children, but also with the teacher to identify strategies that are implemented to facilitate peer support for new entrant children, while another investigates ‘future’ orientations during the transition process.

Helena Ackesjö problematizes her research of children’s perspectives of transition to school to investigate assumptions that the border crossings of transition from preschool to school are presented to children as possible threats, that continuity is positive and desirable, and smooth transitions involve the convergence of traditions and cultures from preschool and school. In doing so she frames her analyses around continuity and discontinuity between school forms, communities and relational contexts as children adapt to the new and separate from the old and reconstruct their identities and expectations. Ackesjö notes that teachers have responsibilities to help children in transition to feel safe in the new context and in the new group of children. This links to the work of Hayes and her colleagues in New Zealand in which teachers created ‘helping’ atmospheres in the class.

Joanne Hayes, Claire McLachlan and Alison Sewell build on research around the distal relationships in which children participate during the transition to school. In New Zealand, children typically commence school on the fifth birthday and move into classes with children who have been at school for longer periods of time. The case study reported in their paper investigated the role of more experienced peers in supporting a new-entrant child, and the strategies the teacher used to support peer help-giving. The importance of giving new-entrant children time to listen to their peers to support purposeful or intent-participation and of affirming help-giving behaviours of other children is highlighted through anecdotal observations and narratives.

Lina Lago notes that transition to school involves changes in temporal orientation; how people relate to and create meaning about past, present and future. She argues that future is an essential component of children’s lives and talking about and using future and time in transition activities are priming events that prepare children for starting school. Her ethnographic study found that the concepts of future and time were important aspects of transition and as priming events they contributed to expectations of change.

These papers remind us of the importance of supportive and thoughtful relationships between all those involved in children’s transition to school.