

## Appendix 1

### Literature summary chart of reviewed articles

Author; Year	Title	Type of Study	Country of Origin	Contextual Information	Major Findings
Akos (2002)	Student perceptions of the transition from elementary to middle school	Qualitative	USA	Data collected in four phases. Phase 1 – questions about Middle School collected from students. Phases 2-4 - questionnaires (similar each time). Phase 4 was purposeful sample of students ‘who experienced success at the middle school’ (p. 340).	Most student questions at the early phases were about rules, procedures and expectations. First two phases – students were worried about older students and bullies. Need to use positives to frame transition programs. Need to include a variety of people in transition (friends, peers, parents). Parent orientation is important.
Anderson et al. (2015)	Focus group outcomes of the Happy Kids program	Mixed methods	Australia	‘Happy Kids’ project ran 2006-2008. Five metropolitan and four regional schools involved in program. Focus group students (n=15). Particular focus on wellbeing of indigenous students.	Program reported as having positive social & emotional impact on all students. Positive effect on confidence, social skills and wellbeing demonstrated by participants. Improved student attendance at school.
Ashton (2008)	Improving the transfer to secondary school: How every child's voice can matter	Mixed methods	England	Part of larger study (Neighbourhood Renewal Fund project). Questionnaire completed by Year 6 students (n=1,673); author visit to three Year 6 classes.	Children’s views are highly valuable in the transition process. Social aspects are important in transition. Relationship building is a key factor in successful transition.
Bagnall et al. (2021a)	What emotional-centred challenges do children attending special schools face over primary–secondary school transition?	Qualitative	UK	Longitudinal case study. Students in Years 5 and 6 (n=17), staff (n=7) and parents (n=6) at one special school.	Student & parent experiences provided a voice for students with social and emotional difficulties, an area previously ‘heavily underrepresented’ (p. 21) in the literature. Importance of collaboration between primary and secondary schools, students and families highlighted so that student needs are adequately catered for at correct level.
Bagnall et al. (2021b)	When is the ‘optimal’ time for school transition? An insight	Qualitative	UK and USA	Exploratory-explanatory case study. Comparing primary to secondary school transition in UK & USA.	Differences exist in how primary to secondary school transition is viewed. General ‘gradual progression’ view in USA versus ‘loss’ in UK (p. 368).

	into provision in the US			Seven schools within four school districts. Focus groups with students in Grades 6, 7 and 9 (n=43) and interviews with parents (n=2) and school staff (n=11).	Choice of a two-tier or three-tier school transition system in USA. Study showed that students preferred the three-tier system and parents preferred the two-tier system. Trained counsellors support transition process in USA.
Bagnall et al. (2021c)	Evaluating a universal emotional-centred intervention to improve children's emotional well-being over primary-secondary school transition	Mixed methods	England	Longitudinal (three time points); quasi-experimental. Evaluation of 'Talking About School Transition' program. Year 6 students (n=143).	'One size fits all' approach to transition does not work. Intervention program reportedly enjoyed by students and had positive impact on their social-emotional needs, particularly with reducing worries about secondary school.
Bagnall & Jindal-Snape (2023)	Child self-report measures of primary-secondary transition experiences and emotional wellbeing: An international systematic literature review	Systematic literature review	UK	60 articles in review. Thematic analysis.	Major conceptual and theoretical limitations identified in field. Negative bias identified in literature. Paucity of studies using student voice. Lack of focus on emotional wellbeing in primary to secondary transition literature. It is important to check the validity and reliability of scales used in studies. Researchers need to be clear about all key conceptualisations
Bagnall et al. (2022)	Primary-secondary school transition under Covid-19: Exploring the perceptions and experiences of children, parents/guardians, and teachers	Mixed methods	UK	Online surveys with open & closed questions. Conducted Sep-Nov 2020. Year 7 students (n=101) and parents (n=88). Primary school teachers (n=26) and secondary school teachers (n=40).	No previously published experiential/ qualitative studies on impacts of Covid-19. Transition should be viewed as a natural step or gradual progression. Big impact of Covid-19 on transition led to recommendations: 1. Develop emotional wellbeing, resilience & coping skills throughout primary school 2. Clear communication is critical to supporting children 3. Support for emotional wellbeing should be at forefront of transition 4. The significant milestone of transition needs to be recognised. 5. Teachers also need support.
Bagnall et al. (2020)	'You're in this world now': Students', teachers', and parents' experiences of school transition and how they feel it can be improved	Qualitative	England	Year 7 students (n=45), parents (n=8) and teachers (n=8); Year 6 teachers (n=8) across five primary and five secondary schools.	Importance of considering multiple perspectives (students, parents and staff) with regard to transition. Three main themes, each with sub-themes, identified: 'Recognition of emotions', 'Managing relationships' and 'Managing expectations'. Consideration needs to be given regarding balance between maintaining consistency in primary school with exposure to information about life in secondary school.

Bagnall et al. (2024)	A mixed-methods evaluation of a longitudinal primary–secondary school transitions support intervention	Mixed methods	UK	Questionnaire. Evaluate support intervention programme ‘Transitions 5-7’. Student questionnaires (Year 5 n=185; Year 6 n=217; Year 7 n=162); Year 6 focus groups (n=3); staff interviews (n=4).	Importance of gradual and progressive skill development in students identified. Program helped to decrease worries about transition. Program helped to increase excitement about transition and ability to cope with it. Parent support for children’s emotional wellbeing found to be important.
Beatson et al. (2023)	Improving primary to secondary school transitions: A systematic review of school-based interventions to prepare and support student social-emotional and educational outcomes	Systematic literature review	Australia	26 studies included. Restricted systematic design.	Evidence that student outcomes are improved through pre-transition social & emotional initiatives & post-transition mindset initiatives that target belonging. More transition studies are needed, including replication of existing studies. Better quality reporting needed in field, including greater transparency. Further investigation of at-risk students is needed.
Bharara (2020)	Factors facilitating a positive transition to secondary school: A systematic literature review	Systematic literature review	New Zealand	22 quantitative studies included.	School and social factors are important in transitioning successfully. Limited research investigating the influence of demographic, physical fitness, psychological and spirituality factors.
Boone & Demanet (2020)	Track choice, school engagement and feelings of perceived control at the transition from primary to secondary school	Quantitative	Belgium	Pre-transition questionnaires (students and teachers separately). Students (n=1,128) in 36 schools.	Hierarchical academic system had strong influence on student beliefs about themselves with regard to wellbeing. Non-academic track students had ‘lower feelings of perceived control and lower levels of behavioural and cognitive engagement [...] higher feelings of futility’ (p. 941). Background of pupils found to be an influencing factor in academic track choice. Most important factor in school engagement found to be teacher assessments of student language competencies.
Brewin & Statham (2011)	Supporting the transition from primary school to secondary school for children who are Looked After	Qualitative	UK	Interviews held with students (n=14), foster carers (n=22), teachers (n=19) and support workers (n=3); social worker focus group.	Paucity of research about children who are Looked After in the UK; also very little from the perspectives of recipients of services. Holistic, tailored transition packages that sensitively consider Looked After children’s needs are required, in addition to existing high-quality transition support.
Carmen et al. (2011)	Rock Up: An initiative supporting students’ wellbeing in their transition to secondary school	Mixed methods	Australia	Questionnaire at three time points (pre, during, post). Students (n=13).	Program designed to provide wellbeing and secondary school readiness support for identified students. Positive student feedback reported, particularly in development of social skills. Recommended repeating program to compare results.

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Cauley & Jovanovich (2006)	Developing an effective transition program for students entering middle school or high school	Theoretical	USA	Synthesising existing literature from USA. Suggesting effective transition program practices.	Reported that Grade 9 is the most challenging year in secondary school and transition needs greater attention at this time point. Student concerns can largely be grouped into ‘academic, procedural and social’ (p. 16). Many detailed recommendations for effective transition programs provided (e.g., good communication and planning; activities should include students, parents and staff; support should be provided before, during and after transition; individual needs must be considered).
Chapman & Sawyer (2001)	Bridging the gap for students at risk of school failure: A social work-initiated middle to high school transition program	Report	USA	Social-work collaborative program for at-risk students ‘Communities-In-Schools’. Student participants (n=11), student social worker, supervisor and school social worker.	Program reportedly enjoyed by its participants. Report evidences the strength of community-based support initiatives and parental involvement. Importance of building trusting relationships between students, parents, community and school highlighted.
Coffey (2013)	Relationships: The key to successful transition from primary to secondary school?	Mixed methods	Australia	Six large Catholic secondary schools. Year 7 students (n=506), parents (n=334) & teachers (n=86). Bespoke questionnaire. Part of a broader study.	Relationships are crucial to successful transitions. Transition is more successful for students when teachers and school staff are supportive and understanding. It is important to value the role that parents play in successful transitions. Careful planning and good communication are important.
Coffey et al. (2013)	Transitioning Year 7 primary students to secondary settings in Western Australian Catholic schools: How successful was the move?	Mixed methods	Australia	Six large Catholic secondary schools. Year 7 students (n=506), parents (n=334) & teachers (n=86). Questionnaire; semi-structured focus group interviews.	Moving Year 7 to start of secondary school reported as a generally successful & positive experience for all stakeholders. Students experiencing same issues as previously experienced by Year 8s when moving schools. Need to remember that students are ‘developmentally less mature’ (p. 12) now when transitioning.
Coffey et al. (2024)	Engaging the early adolescent: What do stakeholders say about the Keeping Kids Engaged in School program?	Qualitative	Australia	Stakeholder perceptions. Years 5-8 students (n=24) in four Government schools. Four focus groups; one-to-one interviews with parents (n=5) and teachers (n=5).	Program reported to be successful. Students enjoyed activities & looked forward to them. Students were involved in making decisions during program. Not a universal program – can be tailored within each school to meet needs.
Cunningham et al. (2024)	Supporting the mental health of young people from ethnically diverse groups during the	Qualitative	UK	Students(n=7) and peer researcher (n=1). Collaborative, multi-disciplinary academic team. Participatory design with four online workshops.	Student experience reported in detail. Ethnic groups represented. Mental health of participants suffered during transition. Whole school support approach recommended, including awareness of cultural sensitivities.

	transition from primary to secondary school				Reported very limited research in ethnic groups and little with student perspectives.
Curson et al. (2019)	Exploring the experience of students making the transition from primary school to secondary school: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the role of friendship and family support	Qualitative	UK	Part of larger study. 20-minute semi-structured individual interviews with students (n=9) at end of first year in one secondary school.	Changing nature of friendships found to be very important. Reports that more research on the impacts of family support & siblings is needed. Support for students in navigating the realities of secondary school and changing friendships needed. Support for and research about programs for parents is recommended.
Demkowicz et al. (2023)	'It's scary starting a new school': Children and young people's perspectives on wellbeing support during educational transitions	Qualitative	England	Focus groups with students (n=49). Part of broader project commissioned by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Storybook approach.	Student views on what would support a good transition are scant in the literature. Variety of transitions within schools discussed, including primary to secondary school. Students value a thoughtful support approach that takes their needs and communities into consideration. Preparation for transitions is important to students. Connections with others, including peers, are important.
Donaldson, Hawkins et al. (2024)	Trajectories of mental health across the primary to secondary school transition	Quantitative	UK	Questionnaires. Data collection at three time points (varying participation) - end of Year 6 and beginning and end of Year 7; student responses (n=1861) included in final reporting.	Mental health difficulties increase towards the end of primary school. Links identified between mental health difficulties and students from a low socio-economic background, those with special educational needs and those who had experienced two or more negative life experiences.
Donaldson, Morgan et al. (2024)	Mental health, bullying and school connectedness: A comparative analysis of school transition at age 11 from within the Welsh education system	Quantitative	UK	Students from 21 all-age schools (n=2,272) and 21 secondary schools (n=2,744).	Students from a low socio-economic background might benefit from transition to all-age school. Students from a high socio-economic background might benefit from transition to separate secondary school. Some evidence that all-age schools might benefit mental health of students. Students might not want to admit to being bullied or recognise bullying.
Dörrenbächer-Ulrich et al. (2023)	Investigating the relationship between self-regulated learning, metacognition, and executive functions by	Systematic literature review	Germany	25 studies included.	Appears to be negative development of self-regulated learning in primary to secondary school transition, significant increase in metacognitive awareness and varying rates of development in the areas of executive functioning. Scant literature looking at changes during transitions reported.

	focusing on academic transition phases: A systematic review				Imbalance in field reported with more research looking at executive functioning than self-regulated learning and metacognition.
Duchesne et al. (2012)	Worries about middle school transition and subsequent adjustment: The moderating role of classroom goal structure	Quantitative	Canada	Pairs of adolescents and mothers (n=342). Longitudinal (Grades 6-8). Questionnaires.	Three main middle school (Grade 8) profiles identified: WA (well adjusted); SEA (social emotional adjustment); SA (social). More boys in SEA profile and more girls in SA profile. Type of goal setting in Grade 7 by teachers impacts students. Elementary to middle school transition found to impact the middle to high school transition two years later.
Edge et al. (2023)	Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on secondary school teaching staff and primary to secondary transitions	Qualitative	UK	Semi-structured interviews with school staff (n=12).	Student behaviour was negatively impacted by Covid-19. Increased student anxiety reported. Reduced EQ and wellbeing reported. Enhanced use of technology reported (e.g. virtual tours; teacher upskilling). Longitudinal research recommended to understand impacts of pandemic.
Ellerbrock et al. (2023)	Supporting a responsive transition to high school through a summer transition camp	Qualitative	USA	Case study. 32 participants (students n=20). Focus group interviews; one individual interview with coordinator; observations; document data.	Limited research on effectiveness of camps reported. Summer camps have potential to support student needs; however, it is important to listen to what students want. Recommend activities are tailored to student needs; additionally, students need to perceive activities as beneficial.
Ellerbrock & Kiefer (2014)	Supporting young adolescents' middle-to-high-school transition by creating a ninth grade community of care: Implications for middle grades educators	Qualitative	USA	Program delivered to all students at one high school (~1800 students). Purposive sampling for study – one lead teacher and nine students. Interviews; classroom observations; document collection.	Program reported as having a significant impact as it positively changed the atmosphere of the cohort. Appointing responsive, positive, caring-focused teachers is crucial. Allowing students to build & feel cohesion and belongingness as a group is important. Crucial factor is the commitment of teachers to foster enduring student relationships beyond the nine-week course. Collaboration between middle & high school teachers is important, as is being responsive to student needs.
Eskela-Haapanen et al. (2021)	Students' positive expectations and concerns prior to the school transition to lower secondary school	Mixed methods	Finland	Part of extensive follow-up study. Students (n=1,037). Parent and student questionnaires. Parent questionnaire included questions to ask their own children.	Contributed to understanding of student expectations and concerns prior to transition and their relationship with student wellbeing. Student concerns about peer relationships were found to have likely association with school burnout. Identified that it is important for parents & teachers to prepare students for transition into secondary school.
Espelage et al. (2015)	Understanding ecological factors	Quantitative	USA	Three schools.	Bullying incidence fairly stable.

	associated with bullying across the elementary to middle school transition in the United States			Student questionnaires at two time points: T1 (n=300) and T2 (n=237).	Bullying increases reported to coincide with individual & socio-environmental factors. Supportive and trusting relationships with middle school teachers and positive school climate can help. Greater anxiety and depression levels reported in connection with bullying. Suggest supporting students' wellbeing and psychological development to assist bullies and victims.
Evans et al. (2018)	A review of the academic and psychological impact of the transition to secondary education	Literature review (type not specified)	UK	Number of studies not specified.	Found that mental health concerns are a major issue in young adolescents. Early interventions are recommended for best outcomes. Many gaps identified in the literature (e.g. use of technology; bullying; summer activities; cultural diversity; longitudinal research on outcomes).
Francis et al. (2021)	Are you listening? Echoing the voices of looked after children about their transition to secondary school	Qualitative	UK	'Looked after' children (n=36); foster carers (n=6); secondary school mentors (n=2). Multi-method; creative activities.	Strong representation of student voice. Supportive friendships and a sense of belonging very important to students. Good communication and responsive support important for supporting students. Themes: 'social connections & relationships matter'; 'feeling safe & belonging'; 'school life'. Cohort had usual worries about school life in secondary school. Students generally didn't want to be seen as different from peers.
Fraser et al. (2021)	Hope levels across adolescence and the transition to high school: Associations with school stress and achievement	Quantitative	USA	Adolescents (n=1,018). Self-report questionnaires.	Hope found to be fairly stable across the school grades, except for a large drop in Grade 8 prior to transition. Hope found to increase after transition into high school. Worries about academics during Grade 7 negatively impacted hope in Grade 8. Identified limited research on hope trajectories.
Ganeson & Ehrich (2009)	Transition into high school: A phenomenological study	Qualitative	Australia	Students (n=16) at one government secondary school. Students kept diaries kept for the first 10 weeks of secondary school.	Seven themes identified, including importance of peers, supportive school structures and activities and role of teachers. Social aspects are critical. Bullying was not an issue. Important to have helpful teachers who are supportive of student needs important. Volume of homework was generally overwhelming.
Garner & Bagnall (2023)	Transitions from primary to secondary school in Greater Manchester: A qualitative exploration	Qualitative	UK	Students (n=9). Semi-structured Zoom interviews.	Study is the first to qualitatively look at primary to secondary school transition from the perspectives of students who receive pupil premium funding. A more systematic, longitudinal approach to transition that starts in Year 5 is recommended.

	of the perspectives of Year 6 children who receive pupil premium funding				Need open discussions with students in classes at primary school so that students “develop transition awareness, knowledge & skills” (p. 17).
Gillison et al. (2008)	Changes in quality of life and psychological need satisfaction following the transition to secondary school	Quantitative	UK	Year 7 students (n=63) at one school. Three self-report questionnaires over 10 weeks.	Most students demonstrated a ‘meaningful improvement in QoL and psychological need satisfaction’ (p.157). Importance of relatedness, particularly with peers, highlighted. Study identified that there is a need to develop reliable child and adolescent tools as the tools used had a lower than desirable reliability.
Hannah et al. (2023)	Mapping the methodological quality of international primary-secondary transitions research literature: A systematic methodological review	Systematic review	UK	151 studies included. Also review of reviews (n=12).	Most included papers had not stated authors’ philosophical perspective. Conceptualisations are important to include in studies. Importance of congruence between theorisation (especially theorisation of transitions), conceptualisation and methodology of studies highlighted.
Harris et al. (2024)	Intersecting identities and adjustment to the primary-secondary school transition: An integrative review	Integrative review	UK	8 studies included.	Three themes identified: academic & social discord; defining & constructing negative identities; the female body. Reported that there is no contextual discussion of male/ female identity beyond the societal norm. Also reported a lack of discussion about religion, male sexuality, disability & SEN; limited SES discussion. Identified that it is important to recognise and value impact of intersecting, non-dominant identities in both research literature and in school transition.
Hassard et al. (2024)	Sense of belonging pre/post transition to secondary school: Privileging student voice	Mixed methods	Australia	Quantitative data reported on (students n=317). Overall study included pre- and post-transition responses from Year 6 students (n=471) at 18 primary schools and Year 7 students (n=317) at 11 secondary schools.	Sense of belonging at school was found to be stable across transition. No discernible gender differences reported. Two important factors were student connections with their peers and with their teachers. Longitudinal research recommended to track student sense of belonging over time.
Heinsch et al. (2020)	Peer connectedness during the transition to secondary school: A collaborative opportunity for	Mixed methods	Australia	Students (n=99) at one secondary school. From ‘Creating Meaningful Connections’ project.	Some of the many complexities of school connectedness were highlighted, including importance of peers and power of schools to promote positive transition. Study recommends interventions to assist with school & peer connectedness and targeted interventions for those who find it challenging.

	education and social work			Focus groups were conducted nine months after transition to secondary school.	
Hodgkin et al. (2025)	Navigating the complexity of transition: Sharing the views of learners during the primary-secondary school transition in Wales	Qualitative	UK	Students at one urban primary school (n=13) and one inner city secondary school (n=12).	Importance of support networks identified. Transition described as a 'complex web of mechanisms that work together' (p.11). Study identified that students need to make use of all of the transition activities offered and the importance of open dialogue being maintained between parents and the school.
Holt et al. (2023)	Facilitating a positive transition: A case study exploring the factors that support social, emotional and mental wellbeing from primary to secondary school	Qualitative	UK	School staff (n=6) across primary and secondary schools.	Study highlighted the importance of relationships with others, communication and collaboration and a positive learning environment. Primary to secondary school transition described as an ongoing process and that a shared understanding of process between schools is important. Positive framing of questions encouraged in future studies.
Jindal-Snape et al. (2023)	Primary-secondary school transition experiences and factors associated with differences in these experiences: Analysis of the longitudinal Growing Up in Scotland dataset	Quantitative	UK	Students (n=2,557) across final year in primary school and first year at secondary school. 'Growing Up in Scotland' dataset was not specifically designed for primary to secondary school transition, meaning that not all aspects of MMT Theory could be reported on.	Generally positive findings reported, with just over 1 in 5 students having a negative experience. Importance of parent information and support discussed. Recommendations for many future areas of research, including in low socio-economic areas, students with additional needs and the impact of siblings.
Jindal-Snape et al. (2020)	Systematic literature review of primary-secondary transitions: International research	Systematic literature review	UK	96 studies included.	First review to bring together multiple aspects of primary to secondary school transition, including 'educational and wellbeing outcomes, and protective and risk factors' (p. 556). Reports that there is a largely negative discourse in the literature and a lack of longitudinal studies. Sense of belonging as well as connectedness with school identified as important, as well as providing for a variety of student needs.
Jindal-Snape & Miller (2008)	A challenge of living? Understanding the psycho-social processes of the child during primary-	Theoretical	UK	Examined existing literature - theoretical & empirical.	Be aware of the personal and social messages that children provide. Transition might be overwhelming for students. Protective factors, especially family, parents and the community, should be recognised & utilised. Conceptual clarity in resilience theory provided.

	secondary transition through resilience and self-esteem theories				Recognition of students & meeting their needs/ideas is important.
Jindal-Snape, Symonds et al. (2021)	Conceptualising primary-secondary school transitions: A systematic mapping review of worldviews, theories and frameworks	Systematic mapping review	UK	96 studies (same studies as Jindal-Snape et al., 2020).	Identified that there is no clear conceptualisation of primary to secondary school transition in the literature. Highlights the need to view transition as a normative event and to reframe contextual discussions from a negative to a positive viewpoint.
Katsantonis (2025)	I belong; hence, I engage? A cohort study of transitions between school engagement classes and academic achievement: The role of relational school climate	Quantitative	Australia	Students (n=3,643) tracked in 'Growing Up in Australia' dataset from 8/9 years old to 14/15 years old.	Close relationships with primary school teachers and a school climate that fosters a sense of belonging identified as important buffers against student disengagement. Longitudinal school engagement studies recommended.
Kostina-Ritchey et al. (2017)	Student assets and commitment to learning in an afterschool leadership development program: Looking beyond the myths	Quantitative	USA	Students (n=261) who chose to participate in programme. Broad base of student backgrounds represented.	Investigated relationship between student characteristics (socio-economic status and rural versus urban), external assets (support and empowerment) and internal assets (positive values and commitment to learning). Three main asset groups identified (high, average and low) and all asset groups contained variety of student characteristics. Provides support for access to high-quality after-school development programs for all students.
Lin et al. (2024)	The influence of resilience and future orientation on academic achievement during the transition to high school: The mediating role of social support	Quantitative	Italy	Students (n=958) at three different types of secondary school. Questionnaire.	Study reports a 'strong positive correlation among resilience, social support, and academic success, with resilience directly enhancing academic achievement' (p. 1). Academic achievement was found to be positively impacted by resilience. Study recommends involving families in transition to secondary school and supporting students with friendship guides. Future exploration of the nuances within social support recommended.
Lorijn, Laninga-Wijnen et al. (2024)	How peer status and ability track shape behavioral disengagement over the	Quantitative	The Netherlands	One cohort of students tracked (T1 n=1564 reduced to n=698 by T3). Three time points (two pre- & one post-transition). Surveys.	Behavioural disengagement begins in primary school and peaks during the last year of primary school. Behavioural disengagement found to be greater in students with a higher peer status, as well as students on a lower academic track.

	transition from primary to secondary school				
Lorijn, Zwier et al. (2024)	A new school, a fresh start? Change and stability in peer relationships and academic performance in the transition from primary to secondary school	Quantitative	The Netherlands	Students (n=649). Data from a prior project used (PRIMS) and linked to national administrative data regarding cohort.	Students generally found to become more attached to peers and less lonely during transition, including those who had experienced negative peer experiences in primary school. Victimization did not change. Recommends considering how to create more open discussion opportunities between primary and secondary school staff and longitudinal work to investigate peer relationships and academic impacts longer term.
Lukey et al. (2024)	Practices and programmes that enhance successful transition and participation in high school for Indigenous young people: A systematic review	Systematic literature review	Australia	22 articles included (Australia n=11). First literature review to systematically analyse the participation of indigenous students in primary to secondary school transition.	Review highlights the importance of relationships, family and community in the transition to secondary school and recommends collaboration between students, families and the community to support students. Strengths-based education, nurturing student identity and long-term mentoring of students are important, as is yarning with students to understand what works for them.
Mackenzie et al. (2012)	Perceptions of primary to secondary school transitions: Challenge or threat?	Mixed methods	Australia	Students in Year 6 (n=28) and Year 7 (n=47) at one all-girls school. Questionnaire in Term 4 and focus group with eight randomly selected Year 6 students.	Students in Year 6 were generally more positive about transition than those in Year 7. Students in Year 6 identified many things that they were looking forward to in secondary school (e.g., new subjects and teachers), as well as concerns (e.g., multiple academic concerns). Having an older sister at the same school reduced social concerns of Year 6 sibling. Further study on a larger scale and across different schools recommended, as well as longitudinal studies looking at the same cohort.
Mumford & Birchwood (2021)	Transition: A systematic review of literature exploring the experiences of pupils moving from primary to secondary school in the UK	Systematic literature review	UK	Seven studies included, all of which were conducted in England using qualitative methods only.	Five themes, each with sub-themes, identified: environment, relationships, emotions, identity and support/ strategies for transition. Relationships with others were found to be the key supportive factor in the transition to secondary school.
Packer et al. (2021)	Voices of transition: Sharing experiences from the primary school	Qualitative	UK	Students (n=30) participated in focus groups. Questionnaires delivered to parents/ caregivers (n=150; actual participation rate not identified).	Study states that it is important to listen to the voices of all stakeholders, as well as being responsive to the needs of learners. Importance of having a shared understanding of transition and engagement with it was highlighted.

				Interviews conducted with practitioners (n=16).	Greater research involving parents is recommended, as are studies investigating students with special educational needs.
Pollak et al. (2024)	Promoting peer connectedness through social-emotional learning: Evaluating the intervention effect mechanisms and implementation factors of a social-emotional learning programme for 9 to 12-year-olds	Quantitative	Austria	Intervention group students (n=195) and control group students (n=281). Intervention programme focussed on emotions. Questionnaire. Some classes did not finish the full program.	Study reports that the focal areas of happiness, peer connectedness and social skills were significantly and positively affected by intervention program. A decline in classroom climate was reported for both groups, with authors suggesting that support around the implementation of support program might be beneficial.
Rogers et al. (2017)	Developmental change in sibling support and school commitment across adolescence	Quantitative.	USA	Student and sibling pairs (total participant n=444). Four time points across Grades 7-10; participant numbers variable across the time points. Questionnaires administered during home visits. Data came from 1989-1992 Family Transitions Project.	Study identified a link between supportive siblings & positive school commitment for students transitioning from middle to high school. Having an older brother enhanced a younger sibling's commitment to school. Sibling support increased across Grades 7-10. School commitment decreased across Grades 7-9.
Sniedze-Gregory et al. (2021)	What Australian students say about transition to secondary school: Final report	Report	Australia	Australian Council for Educational Research report in conjunction with Life Education Australia.	A sense of community & belongingness was identified as important for students. Students need a 'wellbeing buffer' (p. 63) that includes skills such as resilience to help them cope with life changes, as well as greater agency and responsibility. Students need earlier support earlier in primary school, as well as greater support post-transition, with resources tailored to their needs and learning preferences.
Topping (2011)	Primary-secondary transition: Differences between teachers' and children's perceptions	Systematic literature review	UK	88 studies included.	Differences in perspectives between teachers and students found. Teachers had more of an academic focus and students a more social-emotional one. Students view primary to secondary school transition with a mix of optimism & anxiety.
Van Rens et al. (2019)	(How) Does information provided by children affect the transition from primary to secondary school?	Quantitative	The Netherlands	Students (n=371). Data collected over 4 years/cohorts at the end of Grade 6 and start of Grade 7. Self-report questionnaires.	Study recommends being aware of student perspectives & using them to help support those transitioning into secondary school. Children at special needs schools, anxious students and, to a lesser extent, girls, were found to be more vulnerable during primary to secondary school transition.

Visser et al. (2023)	What do students need to support their transition to secondary school?	Qualitative	The Netherlands	Students (n=10). Interviews ~4/5 years after students had participated in transition intervention program 'Talent Classrooms'.	Most needs were reported as being met by program but not autonomy, competency and identity development. Study suggests that developing autonomy skills, including independent working skills, might help with secondary school preparation. Tailoring support to student needs is highlighted. Larger study is recommended, as well as comparison of program's effectiveness over time in same cohort.
Wang et al. (2019)	Does parental involvement matter for students' mental health in middle school?	Quantitative	USA	Middle school students (Grades 6-8; n=301,628) in 615 schools. Data from 2013/14 Georgia Student Health Survey.	Study reports that there are fewer issues when parents are actively involved. Parental involvement found to not be as protective for cyber victimisation as for traditional victimisation. Parental involvement possibly focuses more on academic side rather than social side of transition. Parental involvement can be influenced by their child's gender, grade level and victimisation status, as well as family ethnicity and socio-economic status, all of which are under-researched areas. Recommends that schools provide a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved.
Wood et al. (2025)	"I get by with a little help from my friends": The importance of peer-led emotion work during the primary to secondary school transition	Qualitative	UK	Students (n=20) in Year 7 at one secondary school. Part of larger study. Individual, semi-structured interviews.	Peer-led emotion support work and ethics of care reported to be very effective in helping with wide range of issues that students face and strategies that they use to manage these, including friendships and academic concerns. School commitment to modelling and supporting ethics of care-led practices beneficial to students beyond the classroom.