Working together
for a good start at school

Process guide

About the process

The course of the process
The process consists of two phases and a review.
PHASE 1: What is our common start point? Talk here about the values which make up the basis for collaboration about children's transition from daycare to school and after-school centres.
PHASE 2: How should our collaboration be realised? Talk here about how your collaboration should specifically be realised and what you want to achieve from the activities you initiate.
REVIEW: What is our next step? Here you review your discussions and agree the next step in your collaboration.

Step-by-step in each phase
PHASE 1 and PHASE 2 consist of three steps in which you first describe and share your own experiences, then together create and reflect before finally prioritising and focussing your joint work.

A. Share your reflections
B. Create a common picture
C. Choose focus

The dialogue
The conversation takes place in a dialogue group with 6-7 participants. It is also possible for many participants in smaller groups to use the tool. Participants are the specialists and managers involved in children's transition between kindergarten, school and after-school centre.
It is important that the dialogue groups include participants from different specialist groups. However, it is up to you whether employees and managers should be part of the same or different dialogue groups.

Your conversations will be supported by dialogue cards. The cards contain a number of statements and pictures in which you can reflect on your own considerations. The cards are the hub of the conversation and they build a common picture of your considerations and priorities for collaboration on children's transition. Articles which can stimulate thoughts and ideas before the process will also support the conversation.

The process itself takes around three hours. If there are a lot of participants, you should allocate time for plenary review after both phases.

Advice for the process

Stimulate thoughts and ideas before the meeting
Send the two articles to inspire participants before the process. The articles can be downloaded at www.eva.dk, and they are easy to pass on.

Appoint someone as responsible for the process
Appoint someone before the dialogue. The person should read the material and will be responsible for steering you through the phases in the dialogue. The person responsible for the dialogue helps place and move the dialogue cards as required.

Have the process guide nearby
Ensure that the process guide is at hand to keep you on track. You do not need an overview of the entire process; you can just follow the guide point by point.

Create a good atmosphere
For example, start with a round of introductions in which everyone presents themselves and their institution.

Summarise the process
It may be advisable for the person responsible for the process to initially tell participants about the various parts of the process, so that everyone has the same understanding of what is to happen.

The same person can also sum up the individual points for the other participants underway. For example: "We will now take 5 min. to familiarize ourselves with the dialogue cards."

Keep an eye on the time
Appoint a timekeeper to ensure you keep to about the same time for each phase as stated in the guide.

Stimulate the conversation
If no one takes the floor, the person responsible for the process should encourage someone to start. Make sure that everyone has a chance to say something.

Make the tool your own
If you need to add your own words or concepts underway, you can use the blank cards to create your own dialogue. You can also use the blank cards to note the activities you discuss and the agreements you make.

Cement your dialogue and decisions
Use a mobile phone or camera to take photos of the dialogue cards and decisions during the process. The guide describes when in the process it could be advisable to cement your reflections and agreements.

PHASE 1
What is our common start point?

Talk here about the values which form the basis for collaboration about children's transition from daycare to school and after-school centres.

Allow 1 hour 15 min.

You will need:
The 12 red dialogue cards, the red main card with the text "What is our common start point?" and the blank red cards to use if you want to add your own cards underway.

Get to know the dialogue cards
(about 5 min.)

- Place the main card with the text "What is our common start point?" in the middle of the table.
- Spread out the 12 red dialogue cards so that everyone can see them.
- Spend some time looking at the cards.

A. Share your reflections
(about 10 min.)

- One of the participants chooses a card which he is especially interested in. The participant shares the thoughts stimulated by the card and then lays the card next to the main card. The other participants listen.
- Next, one by one, the other participants choose a card and talk about their reflections. They can choose cards which have already been chosen, or a new card. The cards chosen are laid back on the table next to the main card or next to another card which the participant thinks it relates to.

B. Create a common picture

(about 25 min.)

- Talk about the thoughts stimulated by the different cards. You can ask about what the other participants have said, or talk more about the thoughts provoked by the cards. Talk about all the cards chosen. Talk about the cards which were not chosen as well. Why weren't they chosen?
- During the conversation, move the cards around as you find relationships between them. You can also add cards which were initially ignored; or discard cards which were initially chosen. The main thing is to discuss how you think the contents of the dialogue cards are linked together.
- Ultimately you will have a common picture, with the cards placed such that they mean something to you. Take a photo of your common picture, which will later remind you about your conversation.

C. Choose focus

(about 25 min.)

- Take it in turns to each point to one or two cards you would like to talk about more. Explain why you want to focus on the specific cards.
- Next decide together on one or two cards you would like to take further. This doesn't mean that the other cards are not important; it just indicates a special focus for your future collaboration.
- Explain your focus for future collaboration on the basis of the cards you have chosen. Talk about what you deem to be important so that you achieve a common picture of the start point for your work.

PHASE 2
How should our collaboration be realised?

Talk here about how your collaboration should specifically be realised and what you want to achieve through the activities you initiate.

Allow about 1 hour 15 min.

You will need:
The 10 blue dialogue cards. The blue main card with the text "How should our collaboration be realised?" and the blank blue cards, if you should need to add your own cards underway.

Get to know the dialogue cards
(about 5 min.)

- Place the main card with the text "How should our collaboration be realised?" in the middle of the table. Leave the one or two cards chosen in PHASE 1 on the table.
- Spread out the 10 blue dialogue cards so that everyone can see them.
- Spend some time looking at the cards.

A. Share your reflections
(about 20 min.)

- One participant chooses a card which he thinks is important to realise the collaboration. The participant shares the thoughts provoked by the card and finishes by laying the card next to the main card. The other participants listen.
- Continue until all the participants have chosen a card and talked about the reflections stimulated by the card. It may be a card already talked about by another participant or a new card. The cards chosen are laid back on the table next to the main card or next to another card which the participant thinks it relates to.

B. Create a common picture
(about 25 min.)

- Talk about the thoughts provoked by the different cards. You can ask about what the other participants have said, or talk more about the thoughts provoked by the individual cards. Talk about all the cards chosen. Talk about the cards which were not chosen as well. Why weren't they chosen?
- During the conversation, move the cards around as you find relationships between them. You can also add cards which were initially ignored; or discard cards which were initially chosen.
- Ultimately you will have a common picture, with the cards placed such that they mean something to you. Take a photo of your common picture which will later remind you about your conversation.

C. Choose focus
(about 25 min.)

- Take it in turns to each point to one card you would like to talk about more. Talk about why you want to focus on precisely that card and about how this relates to the common start point you decided in PHASE 1.
- Together decide on one or two cards on which you would like to focus especially in the future collaboration.
- Individually, each brainstorm notes on the blank cards of possible activities you can start to achieve your targets. Tell each other about the activities you have written down and together decide on 1-2 activities you want to take further. Talk about how you will implement the activities.

REVIEW
What is our next step?

This is where you review your discussions and agree on the next steps for your collaboration.

Allow about 15 min.

You will need:
The yellow main card with the text "What is our next step?" and the blank yellow cards.

- Place the main card with the text "What is our next step?" in the middle of the table. Leave the cards chosen from PHASES 1 and 2 and the cards with your own activities on the table.
- Look at the cards and spend a couple of minutes each considering your own next step. Each participant notes on one of the yellow cards what next steps he will take. Some will not be able to decide before consulting their own institution. For these, the next step will be: "I will consult my institution and get back to the group later".
- Each participant lays his card on the table with a few words. Take a photo of the cards for later distribution to the participants. Each participant takes his own card as a reminder. Agree on a new meeting and who is to convene the meeting.