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### Primary-Secondary School Transition: Impacts and Opportunities for Adjustment

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## Primary-Secondary School Transition: Impacts and Opportunities for Adjustment

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**Abstract:** *The transition from primary to secondary education is an important period in children's lives: academically, socially and emotionally, and can be particularly challenging for some children. Occurring alongside puberty and a change in focus from parents to peer relationships, the transition can be a difficult adjustment for some to navigate. This paper reviews the existing literature on this important school transfer, focusing particularly on three key areas of adjustment: academic, social and emotional. We outline the factors that impact successful school transfer, whilst also highlighting that the transition can create positive opportunities for children. We also highlight from the existing literature how multiple social categorisations can influence how children navigate and experience the transition and argue that future research needs to consider social stratification and adopt an intersectional approach. Implementing an intersectional approach will create new forms of knowledge about the transition resulting in new strategies for policy makers, schools and parents that can be beneficial in assisting children through the transition.*

**Keywords:** Primary-secondary transition, school transfer, school adjustment, intersectionality, social categorisation.

## Introduction

The transition from primary to secondary education is a pivotal period in a child's life. Navigating through a myriad of new emotions and adjusting to a new social and structural environment can be perplexing and unnerving. Children need to adjust to a change in education level and different pedagogy, alongside coping with the emotional aspects of the school move, loss of friendships with teachers and peers from their previous school and the challenge of forming new friendships in the secondary school. Although many children negotiate this transition successfully, some children have negative experiences, which can affect their future transitions and mental health (Benner, 2011). Adaptation to the primary-secondary school (Jindal-Snape, Cantali, MacGillivray, & Hannah, 2019) transfer is often associated with declines in academic achievement and negative impacts on health and well-being. Understanding impacts on the transition process and identifying children who are at an increased risk of having difficulties are important to ensure

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that appropriate support and interventions can be put in place to meet children's needs.

In this paper we outline the evidence base for impacts and opportunities for each of the three key areas of adjustment: academic, social and emotional, and make recommendations for practice. Much of the early research literature in this area focused on examining academic decline relating to the school transfer, so past literature has been primarily focused upon identifying strategies to raise academic attainment and avoid academic decline across the transition. Based on that research an argument has been proposed that changes experienced through the transition can have a substantial impact on health and well-being, in turn resulting in academic decline. We argue in this paper that factors influencing the primary-secondary transition are not independent of each other, and existing literature needs to be examined through a multifaceted lens to fully recognise the contribution of how the interconnected aspects affect children during the transition. We also highlight the role of social stratification in the primary-secondary school transition arguing that this is important to identify hidden factors such as: gender, race/ethnicity and disability as components affecting the transition. Taking an intersectional approach in identifying the multiplicity of factors influencing the primary-secondary school transition will provide a more in-depth analysis of the transition and highlight children who are at an increased risk of having difficulties with the transition. First, we highlight what is already understood in relation to impacts on academic, social and emotional adjustment to the transition. We then present an argument that these key areas of adjustment are not independent but are interconnected and a full understanding of how each category influences each other will only be established when research addresses the primary-secondary school transition from a multifaceted lens. Further we highlight how children with emotional, behavioural and physical support needs, may experience the primary-secondary school transition differently and may require alternate methods of support during this important transition. Finally, we discuss the role of social categorisation and argue that the impact of intersectionality needs to be situated in future research to recognise the ways that multiple forms of social categorisations can impede and isolate children through structural and symbolic oppression. In the final sections of the paper we make recommendations for practice and future research.

## **Primary-Secondary School Transition**

Across the globe children from the age of ten to fourteen encounter the move from primary to secondary school. The school transition is the first of many steps towards adulthood and can be a difficult period for children to adjust to, especially when children are more familiar with the primary school environment which can often provide a more nurturing and collective environment than the secondary school. With puberty occurring at the same time as the school transition, developmental changes can further complicate relationships with families and teachers/schools. Social aspects of the transition can become significantly more important for children while families and teachers are predominately focused upon academic attainment, resulting in conflicting agendas ([Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm, & Splittgerber, 2000](#)). Contending with physical, emotional and environmen-

tal changes simultaneously can be very confusing for children, thus, it is imperative to acknowledge the multiple barriers that children face when making the school transition.

Adjustment to the school transition is typically understood to comprise three components: academic, social and emotional adjustment (Cauley & Jovanovich, 2006). Those three dimensions offer a descriptive method of elucidating how the transition from primary to secondary school encompasses multiple forms of adjustment (Evans, Borriello, & Field, 2018).

## **Academic Adjustment to the Primary-Secondary Transition**

It is well-established in the literature that academic attainment notably declines during the first year of the school transition. This decline in academic performance is considered to be due to several reasons relating to the child, such as children not enjoying the new school, or believing that the first few years are not as important, and also the result of adjustment to differences in pedagogy from primary to secondary school (Evans et al., 2018; Galton, Gray, & Rudduck, 1999). In most cases, the decline in academic attainment is temporary and once children adjust to the new environmental and structural changes, academic performance begins to rise again, however, for some children, the dip in academic attainment remains. Children who have lower ability or poorer academic attainment and/or those with a learning difficulty are more prone to experiencing a retention of this dip in their academic performance (Zeedyk et al., 2003). During this academic decline, some children may begin questioning their scholastic competence. Self-doubt concerning their ability can impact on children's self-esteem and self-identity; when students are not prepared for the increase in academic demands of secondary school, their self-esteem might begin to decline. The increase in homework and levels of knowledge can be very disconcerting for children which can lead to further withdrawal from education, thus, sustaining the dip in academic attainment (Evans et al., 2018). Low academic achievement can contribute to low self-esteem which then in turn affects children's mental health and well-being. As social status and friendships are highly regarded factors for children entering secondary school, popularity is often given more significance for children than academic achievement, often serving to maintain the decline in achievement.

Although academic decline is consistent across the transition, for most children this is often temporary and secondary school can often be a place where academic ability can be nurtured to its greatest potential. For children who previously felt academically limited by primary school, moving into secondary education can be a welcoming opportunity to expand on their knowledge. However, after the transition occurs children are often left feeling frustrated due to the repetitive nature of the schoolwork and they are given (Jindal-Snape, 2009).

## **Social and Emotional Well-Being across the School Transfer**

As already discussed, much of the research literature in this area has focused on examining why a dip in academic attainment occurs and what can be done to prevent it. As a

result of this focus in the literature on the academic decline, there is less research about the impacts on the social and emotional aspects of the school transition for children. Often psychosocial impacts are examined in relation to combating the academic dip, rather than focused on establishing strategies to support children through the emotional and environmental changes involved in the school transfer such as; teacher support relationships, anti-bullying interventions, more school visits and peer network systems (van Rens, Haelermans, Groot, & van den Brink, 2018). But the transition involves important adjustments socially and emotionally that needs to be addressed independently of academic attainment.

## **Social Adjustment across the Primary-Secondary Transfer**

Social integration is an important aspect of adjustment to the primary-secondary transition. Social adjustments are a normative aspect of life, whereby individuals are situated within an ongoing relationship occurring between environment, society and self. A successful school social adjustment in the primary-secondary school transition has been proposed to be a predictor for how future life transitions are managed and impact on future mental health problems (Roybal, Thornton, & Usinger, 2014). The ability to be successful in adjusting socially during a transition period is underpinned by managing new social situations and making friendships in order to be accepted in the new environment. In the transition from primary to secondary school children not only have to adjust to new relationships with teachers and peers, but these relationships may be different in nature to those made in primary school. In addition, the move involves new social identities as a secondary school pupil, rather than a primary school child. In this move there is often an expectation to believe/behave in a more mature way in social relationships and the new social environment. This new form of autonomy that children are experiencing may offer some children the opportunity to explore new social identities, such as their gender/sexuality, race/ethnicity, their artistic interpretation through dress codes or their social status because the school move often involves a large cohort of children, the secondary school transition can create an opportunity for children to reconstruct their identity, surround themselves with like-minded people and create an identity that matches how they feel. The process of identity development for children coincides with puberty/adolescence and the secondary school transition and schools can be pivotal in encouraging and fostering policies and practices that encourage children to be who they want to be. Unfortunately, this is often not the case and through practices such as the hidden curriculum, selection processes and teacher expectations, schools are unintentionally negatively impacting children's identity development (Verhoeven, Poorthuis, & Volman, 2019).

Good quality peer relationships have been shown to assist a smooth transition; children attending a school with other friends/siblings felt more assured and less anxious about the transition (Evans et al., 2018). Establishing social integration and a sense of belonging in the new school is important for children and often is their focus, this is sometimes at odds with their parents and teachers who may focus more on supporting

academic adaption to the school transfer. With teachers focusing primarily on the academic adjustment, children are often left to navigate the social adjustment on their own. Attempting to balance the academic and social adjustment can impact how each adjustment is made, for example, a successful academic adjustment can be at the detriment of social adjustment for children (Fisher, 2017).

Where conflict does occur this can be due to teachers thinking about the long-term effects of academic decline, whereas children are often only concerned with present time. The result of the schools not placing importance on social adjustment to the transition can be reflected with through the hostilities between children and teachers (Topping, 2011). Resolving this conflict requires a mutual understanding from teacher and child in recognising each other's needs. Teachers need to understand the significance that children place on social integration during the transition, whilst children have to acknowledge that teachers are there to provide an education and may need support to understand this.

Children who experience social anxiety are most likely to have difficulties with adjustment to the school move, impacting on their levels of distress across the transition period, due to the additional fears of social rejection they may be experiencing (Nowland & Qualter, 2020). The negative social perception children may experience at this time can result in these children withdrawing from social situations and avoiding social interactions with peers, impacting their social adjustment to the transition. Social anxiety and/or a lack of social skills can lead to increased feelings of loneliness and isolation for children across the school move (Evans et al., 2018; Nowland & Qualter, 2020), which will undoubtedly be reflected in their academic performance and emotional health and well-being.

Given that the transition itself is a social challenge for children, the move itself can become an additional support need for some children who previously showed no particular difficulties or additional needs in primary school. J. K. Rice (2001) highlights the move from primary to secondary school as involving an "institutional discontinuity" that interrupts both structural and environmental factors of the child's life. Addressing the successful adjustment of all children during the transition, as well as targeting those who would be expected to have difficulties is crucial to appropriate support with social adjustment for all children (van Rens et al., 2018). Focusing more upon the individual needs of students and encouraging positive peer networks can help promote children's self-esteem and self-identity. Schools promoting interventions such as: school visits, practice lessons, after-school clubs and extracurricular activities have been conducive in allaying anxieties and also in giving children the opportunity for children to forge new friendships (Coffey, 2013; Lucey & Reay, 2000).

## **Emotional Adjustment across the Primary-Secondary Transfer**

In addition to making new friends and adjusting to the new social environment, children have a myriad of emotions to deal with in the primary-secondary school transition. The loss of relationships with primary school teachers and the lack of familiarity of the new secondary school can be distressing when children are already facing multiple ad-

justments in their lives (Topping, 2011). The loss experienced can often conflict with an excitement about the prospect of starting a new school, building new friendships and increasing autonomy. Many children eagerly anticipate the transition to secondary school as a new beginning in their journey into adulthood. Managing this emotional paradox is an important part of the school transition process and can have impacts on other aspects of adjustment, influencing academic performance (van Rens et al., 2018).

A common finding across studies is a presence of anxiety prior to, during and after the transition (Nowland & Qualter, 2020; Smyth, 2016). With the onset of puberty coinciding at the same time as the school transition, children are more prone to experience anxiety during this period, due to the multiple emotional and physical transformations the child is undergoing such as hormonal changes, physical bodily changes, mental maturation (Pellegrini, 2002). Common anxieties experienced by children during the school transfer period relate to bullying, size of school, getting lost, having no friends, amongst others. However, findings are not consistent about how feelings of anxiety dissipate across the transition period: there are discrepancies in findings across different methodologies. Qualitative studies have consistently found that anxieties do not decrease over the school year (West, Sweeting, & Young, 2010), whereas studies using quantitative methodologies demonstrate that anxieties experienced before the transition are typically short lived and do not impact education attainment or health and well-being in the longer term (Grills-Taquechel, Norton, & Ollendick, 2010; West et al., 2010). Those contradictory findings make it difficult to assess the extent to which anxiety is present during the transition process, how normative this distress is and how it reduces across the transition.

Although, there is an open debate about how long it takes for pre-transition anxiety to dissipate, what is evident in the literature is that pre-transition anxiety for most children reduces across the school transfer but for some this anxiety remains (Bloyce & Frederickson, 2012; Nowland & Qualter, 2020). Primary school children's concerns are often subjected to worries of what may be and the unknown of secondary school. As the transition occurs, concerns children have regarding their new environment and situations become a product of reality and can confirm or negate their initial concerns. If children's fears are confirmed, secondary school can become an arena whereby they are confronted with many years of isolation, social rejection and unhappiness. Early detection of children who may experience distress during the transition is necessary in constructing preventive strategies. Additional support given prior to and after the transition may be conducive in building social skills, reducing anxieties and concerns, furthermore it is imperative that support continues after the transition to avoid children from disengaging academically, emotionally and socially.

Parents and teachers are crucial in recognising the importance of the multiple emotions children are experiencing when leaving primary school. Acknowledging the grief and excitement can be achieved through interventions from schools, parents and caregivers, listening and communicating with children over their sense of emotions, which is pivotal as avoidance can minimise the children's experience (Lucey & Reay, 2000). Anxiety about the school transition needs to be met with understanding and compassion from both teachers and parents. Anxieties are natural responses to perceived threat and the primary-secondary school transition is replete with potential threat for children due to



the new social, emotional and academic challenges that await them. Acknowledging the significance of the emotions that the child is experiencing and providing opportunities to discuss and explore them can create an open dialogue which can reassure children that the anxieties they are experiencing are normal and important.

## **Multiplicity of Factors Impacting School Adjustment**

What is important to appreciate in supporting children across the school transfer is that factors associated with difficulties that children face are often interconnected. Much of the literature in this area is beginning to distinguish between academic, social and emotional adjustment which is important because previous research has been dominated by examining the reasons for the decline in academic achievement. However, these three components of adjustment are interlinked, and future research needs to establish whether there are similar factors influencing each of the types of adjustment or different factors and establish the extent of their interdependency. Although in much of the research types of adjustment, when measured, have been measured separately, they are not fully independent of each other, lacking adjustment in one area can have impacts on other components of adjustment to secondary school. The convergence of the collective influences can have multiple effects on children during the transition period, for example, concerns surrounding scholastic competence and peer relationships pre-transition have been attributed to producing negative images of self-concept and ability post-transition, the result of which can be positively linked with internalising disorders. Furthermore, practices teachers utilise in the classroom can influence the post transition period, for example, successful adjustment is promoted by mastery goal structure where individual learning for self-progress is key and is beneficial in promoting independence, confidence and self-esteem and in turn promoting emotional adjustment. In contrast, practices involving performance goal structure where competitive learning and ability comparison are promoted can be associated with negative self-worth, depressive symptoms and feeling of anxiety ([Duchesne, Ratelle, & Roy, 2012](#)).

## **Children with Primary-Secondary Transition Difficulty**

So far, we have discussed factors that influence the three types of adjustment (academic, social and emotional) during the transition and have highlighted some factors that may make children at increased risk of having poorer adjustment (i.e. children with social anxiety). In the following section we identify some children who are likely to find the school transfer difficult and need additional support to ensure successful adjustment. Consistently in the research literature in this area, children with additional support needs have often been highlighted as those who may find the primary-secondary transition particularly difficult ([Cantali, 2019](#); [Litner, 2003](#)), but in this section we also propose that social categorisation also impacts on the experience of transition.

## **Impact of School Transfer on Children with Additional Needs**

Widely discussed in the literature is the need for additional support with the transition for children with Special Education Needs (SEN) and Additional Support Needs (ASN), who may be at an increased risk of difficulties with the school transition. Due to a heightened perception that they may be socially rejected, children with SEN and ASN may suffer from additional anxiety, which impacts their self-esteem which can result in an increased anxiety (Cantali, 2019; Hughes, Banks, & Terras, 2013). This increased perception of social rejection is due to differences in their social skills. SEN/ASN children are often perceived to express themselves in ways considered different to the expected social 'norm', which can leave them vulnerable to bullying and experiences of being victimised. When such events are experienced in a prolonged way it can result in social withdrawal and poor school attendance and ultimately may result in withdrawal of pupils from the education system. However a wider understanding of individuals with SEN/ASN could be productive in formulating specialised plans for the transition period such as: a longer period to familiarise themselves with the new environment, this extra time could reduce some anxieties surrounding the transition and have create a more positive outlook for children (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019). Further research will need to explore how to assist children with specific needs in completing a successful transition, as current literature available highlights how the adjustment to secondary school may differ for children with SEN/ASN and preventative measures are often vague in that literature in their description making it difficult to put theory into practice (Hughes et al., 2013).

Children with SEN are not a homogeneous group but children with differing needs which will require differing types and level of additional support for the primary-secondary transition, so a child-centred approach is important. Emphasis is often placed on the educational environment to make reasonable adjustments for children who require additional support during the transition, however, anticipatory measures can be organised by teachers and parents alike. Regular teacher/parent meetings can be beneficial in addressing any concerns in advance and implementing specific individual programmes for children with additional support needs. This can be helpful for children, parents and teachers in understanding each other's expectations of the transition (Hughes et al., 2013), as parents and children are the best form of information for new teachers. Creating a dialogue between all involved in the transition can be a positive step forward in providing the appropriate support for the child. Individual support plans agreed by the teachers, parents and children are a particularly effective method of including everyone in the decisions regard the additional support required and may allay some of the concerns from the parents and children.

## **Impact of Social Categorisation on School Transfer**

Less widely discussed in the literature are the important contributions of social categorisations to children's adjustment to the primary-secondary school transition. Social categorisations, such as gender, ethnicity and social class impact how well children navigate

the challenges with the school transfer. For example, social class has been reported to a significant contributor to the transition, children with parents from professional backgrounds experience less difficulties in adjusting than their working-class counterparts (Smyth, 2016)). This is due to children experiencing less parental involvement in their education. Lower parental involvement can result in lower engagement in educational extracurricular activities, parental interaction with children's homework and less engagement with children with regards to their school life. Socioeconomic status is also embedded within the structural framework of the education system, research has presented evidence that schools favour the middle-class culture due to possessing more cultural capital which is deemed important to gain educational success. Lower SES children can often conflict with teachers due to restricted speech codes and less ambition for deferred gratification (Bernstein, 2003), this is important during the transition as preconceived ideas about students from teachers can impact the relationship children build with their new teachers. Such conflict can deter students from forming positive relationships with teachers and peers which can impact on all aspects of the school transition (Murray & Zvoch, 2011).

Cultural differences can affect students when making the primary-secondary transition; belonging to a minority culture can be isolating in a much bigger setting such as a secondary school. Under-representation can occur through schools adopting practices that are excluding of cultural differences, the ethnocentric curriculum and institutional racism have been highlighted as methods of how education is often biased towards the dominant white culture of society. These additional structural differences experienced can make ethnic minorities more susceptible to a problematic transition (Caulfield, Hill, & Shelton, 2005). This can be further compounded by the teacher/student relationships whereby the teacher believes the problem sits with the student and the student blaming the teacher (McGee, Ward, Gibbons, & Harlow, 2003).

Intersectionality is another consideration in understanding factors influencing successful transition from primary to secondary school and is often lacking from research literature. Intersectionality refers to how combined social categorisations such as gender, race/ethnicity, SES, sexuality and disability can cause compounded marginalisation for certain social groups (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). Tilleczek and Ferguson (2007) refers to this as the 'meso' level where culture and identity meet. Contributions of social categorisations can become even more complex when they are understood using an Intersectional approach. Gender and SES are two mitigating factors that are interconnected, boys can be further isolated from the education system, impacting on successful adjustment to the primary-secondary education transition. Boys from lower SES families are more likely to be more concerned with achieving status as opposed to gaining academic success, wielding their masculinity, forming anti-school cultures and rejecting school norms and values can leave boys at dispute with teachers and institutes from a very early stage. Girls have been noted to suffer from lower forms of self-esteem during transition, through puberty and changing bodies girls often compare themselves to their peers this can lead to raised anxiety and other internalising disorders.

Despite this, examination of intersectionality is largely absent in the primary-secondary transition literature. This absence is problematic for drawing conclusions about impacts

on children's adjustment to the transition. Additionally, with the security of primary school removed children are exposed to multiple forms of oppression exerted by society and educational institutes which can result in children questioning their identities.

Children within the school system may be at increased risk of having difficulties with adjustment because of the role social identities play in their new environment. Status becomes a focal point for children during the transition and navigating through the hierarchy of social identities can lead to children experiencing additional isolation and loneliness. Children with identities that do not conform to the hegemonic culture exuded by the educational system therefore are posed with the dilemma of altering their identity for the purpose of conformity or defending their identity which could lead to anti-school culture. The degree to how children adjusts in their new settings can be reflected in the culture of the school, the diversity of students in a larger environment can be attributed to creating a sense of school belonging (Education Review Office, 2020).

However, as we highlighted earlier the secondary school can have an important role in offering an environment where children can explore their identities as a time that identity exploration is important for development. Children become aware of the multiple identities that exist at secondary school and this can lead to new opportunities in feeling accepted and making friends. What is important is that the secondary school offers a culture that enables acceptance of children with alternative social, personal and learning identities.

## **Recommendations for Practice**

Communication is vital to support a successful transition. A consistent dialogue between teachers, parents and children creates supportive and positive relationships prior to the transition. Acknowledging the child as an important stakeholder during the transition process can also help increase their self-esteem, autonomy and independence. Many studies have reported the importance of communication, but have excluded the child from the dialogue, by concentrating on the teacher/parent relationship it diminishes the role of the child in the situation. Although it may be emotionally distressing for parents and stressful for teachers: ultimately, the child is the one that encounters the most adaptation, therefore needs to be involved throughout the entire process ([van Rens et al., 2018](#)). Being involved in the dialogue enables the child to be aware of all information that directly affects his/her life, this sense of security and clarity is crucial at a period when insecurities are heightened. A common intervention put in place by schools to address feelings of anxiety prior to transition is ensuring multiple visits to the new school which assists in familiarisation of new surroundings and new potential teachers. Mental health and well-being awareness for children and teachers could also assist in identifying anxieties prior to the transition which can provide an opportunity for extra support to be given ([Vaz, Parsons, Falkmer, Passmore, & Falkmer, 2014](#)). Peer support programmes offering a realistic idea of secondary school life, academically and socially and from the child's perspective is another method of promoting successful transition. Social and academic expectations change upon entering secondary school and children who have prior knowl-

edge to these changes have the opportunity and extra time to adjust to the new demands they face (F. Rice, Frederickson, & Seymour, 2011; West et al., 2010). Having peer support across the school transition can also act as a mediation for children who are less likely to approach teachers and parents with their concerns and worries.

Despite research identifying factors that hinder a successful transition and schools adopting practices to make the transition easier, many children still struggle to navigate through the multiple upheavals facing them with the school move. Interventions by schools often focus on a whole-group approach to all children transitioning to secondary school, with only some schools targeting additional intervention with children identified as likely to have further difficulties with the transition. It has been firmly established in research that children with SEN and ASN, and children from ethnic minorities may require additional interventions or certainly more individually focused interventions, but there are also other children who may find the transition difficult, such as children with social anxiety, children from lower SES families and children with emotional difficulties. Also, there is a need for an awareness that children that outwardly appear to be managing the transition may be experiencing difficulties that are not being noticed.

## **Future Research**

A reason for children still having difficulties with transition despite the support and interventions from schools to make the transition smooth is that we do not yet have a full understanding of how the different aspects of adjustment interact because current research in this area is still not encompassing how the multiplicity of factors contribute to adjustment. Mental and emotional aspects of the primary-secondary school transition should hold the same importance in future research as academic achievement, which would enhance understanding of the intricate connections that influence the transition process. In this paper we have argued that academic, environmental and social factors require a more detailed analysis to investigate how they are impacting on each other. We also argue that understanding of the influence of social categorisation on adjustment is lacking in the research and there is a need to examine the primary-secondary school transition from an Intersectional approach to incorporate and acknowledge how marginalised groups can face extra barriers during the transition. Finally, the primary-secondary school transition needs to be recognised as an additional support need in itself, this fundamental change will ensure that every child is given the appropriate support during the transition.

A further issue that needs to be addressed in the existing literature is the use of multiple measures for different types of adjustment. The evidence demonstrates some inconsistencies due to the differences in measurements and methodologies used by researchers. As it has been demonstrated that academic, emotional and social adjustments are not interdependent of each other, research measures need to accurately represent how the interplay of adjustments are reflected in its findings, it is important when studies measure more than one aspect of adjustment that interactions between them are also examined. Research also needs to be consistent in which risk factors are included as this will ultimately affect the results of the study (Jindal-Snape et al., 2019), some research focuses

upon the transition as a generic occurrence whilst other research is subject specific such as disability, race/ethnicity. What is noticeably absent in research is the combined influences of the interdependence of factors.

Further, we know little about long term impacts of factors on adjustment because there is a lack of longitudinal studies in this research area. This absence in existing research needs to be addressed to establish how and in what way the primary secondary school transition can influence children as they progress through school. As the transition is also proposed to be an indicator for future transitions and social adjustments, longitudinal studies need to determine the relationship between them both. Future studies are needed that examine the effects of the school transition over a much longer time period.

Critical analysis of how intersectionality impacts the primary-secondary school transition for children is essential for future research to help understand how social categorisations affect children's emotion, social and academic adjustment during the transition. Factors of intersectionality need to be addressed as a matrix of interconnected, structural and societal ideologies, legitimised and reproduced through the education system. In confronting the social, economic and political oppression faced by some social groups in education, new knowledge and strategies can be developed to further facilitate children who begin the primary-secondary school transition from a disadvantaged standpoint.

## **Conclusion**

The primary-secondary school transition has been researched for many years and findings have led to new understandings of how children are navigating the multiple adjustments. Although the focus of early research was on academic adjustment, performance and attainment, researchers are beginning to examine the impacts on social and emotional adjustment as well. A range of interventions have been adopted by schools to support children in making a successful adjustment and these interventions are providing some children with new techniques in making the transition as smooth as possible. However, there are still children who experience negativity and/or poor adjustment to the transition. Many aspects of the transition such as impacts of intersectionality and the interdependency of the different types of adjustment and factors influencing them have been largely overlooked in the current literature. Exploration of the primary-secondary school transition requires analysis from a multifaceted lens that takes into consideration children's lives outside of the school and needs to incorporate an Intersectional approach. When this is achieved, we will have a better understanding of the impacts on transition and their interdependency and will be able to provide appropriate and adequate support to children that continue to find adjustment to secondary school difficult.

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