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**Using the New Zealand Child and Youth Profile with
Groups Transitioning Students with Complex Needs
into or out of Secondary School**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment for the requirement of the degree of

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Abstract

The transition for students with complex needs when changing or leaving school can be a significant process for both the student, their families, schools and the community. Transitions bring mixed emotions of anxiety and excitement for the student and their family as they enter a new setting and new relationships are forged. The focus of this study was to investigate whether the New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) could support and assist with successful transition for two students transitioning either into or out of secondary school. Two groups supporting a student with complex needs, used the NZCYP to gather information about the student to assist with transition. Focus groups and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data about the usefulness of the NZCYP and its ability to support successful transitions. A thematic analysis was used to code the data and discover the dominant themes. The data revealed that the participants of the focus groups were mostly enthusiastic about the NZCYP. The findings suggest that the NZCYP can support groups to collaborate in order to gather and collate useful information for students with complex needs. It has the potential to support planning and successful transition. More research is required around how to best use the NZCYP to gain maximum benefits for its use in transition.

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Glossary

ASD	Autistic spectrum disorder
CN	Complex needs
IEP	Individualised education planning
NAGs	National Administration Guidelines
NZCYP	New Zealand Child and Youth Profile
ORS	Ongoing Resourcing Scheme
SENCO	Special Education Needs Co-ordinator
TPI	Transitioning Planning Inventory

Chapter One: Introduction

This study utilised a phenomenological approach to examine the perceptions of two groups of participants who used the toolkit, The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP). These participants made up groups who were responsible for transitioning two students with complex needs (CN). These students met the criteria to receive funding through the *Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS)* by means of the Ministry of Education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. One student was transitioning into secondary school and the other was preparing to leave secondary school. This chapter begins by introducing the topic about transitions before providing context about this topic in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The NZCYP is introduced and its development explained. This is followed by the rationale for the study, and then the research questions are stated. Next the participant perspectives are considered, followed by the positionality of the researcher. This is followed by a description of a theoretical framework for transition, models of disability, an explanation of the biopsychosocial approach, and details about ORS are provided. The chapter concludes with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

Transition – a Time of Change

In life, we all go through transitions and change. These include such milestones as; going to school, finding a job, leaving home, starting our own families and eventually retiring (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2001). McAdams et al. (2001) refer to the mixture of emotions such as anxiety and excitement, as the uncertainty of what the transition means for the individual is yet to be realised. A transition is something that can be a one-off event, but

usually it is a process and takes time to work through (Ministry of Education, 2010)

The focus of this study is school transitions. Examples of these include the movement from pre-school into primary school, from primary school to secondary school, from secondary to post-school study, training and work (Patton & Kim, 2016). Transitions can even happen within the context of an existing school when students change teacher and class from one year to the next. The specific focus for this study is transitions into and out of secondary school for students with CN.

For students to be successful when they transition into or out of secondary school, there needs to be effective support, good transition practices, and planning (Strnadová & Cumming, 2014). This is particularly so for students with CN (Fontil, Gittens, Beaudoin, & Sladeczek, 2019; Patton & Kim, 2016). Literature agrees that at each transition point, students with CN have specific demands placed on both them, their families, and their teachers (Strnadová & Cumming, 2014). Transition is seen as a time that can be stressful for both the family and the child (Knesting, Hokanson, & Waldron, 2008; Strnadová, Cumming, & Danker, 2016).

With transitions from primary to secondary school, if they are unsuccessful, research has shown that future outcomes educationally, emotionally and socially may be negative (Shogren & Plotner, 2012; van Rens, Haelermans, Groot, & Maassen van den Brink, 2018; Waters, Lester, Wenden, & Cross, 2012). However, if students transition successfully between schools, research has shown that this will be evidenced by these five factors (1) there

will be friendships, increased self-confidence and self-esteem; (2) the student will cause no concern for their parents as they are settled; (3) the student will show an increased interest in school and schoolwork; (4) the student will know their new routines and, (5) the student will know how the school is organised (Evangelou et al., 2008).

As for students with CN leaving secondary school, there are challenges unique to them as they are transitioning from being a school student to becoming a member of the adult world. The challenges that face these students and their families are enormous as they leave the security of the school environment that they have known for many years (Gauthier-Boudreault, Gallagher, & Couture, 2017; Hatfield, Ciccarelli, Falkmer, & Falkmer, 2018). There is often a feeling of loss, and an increase in worry, anxiety and stress (Jacobs, MacMahon, & Quayle, 2018). New challenges may include; the desire to find meaningful occupation, further education, connecting with the community, suitable leisure and recreation options, finding suitable independent living arrangements, and factors that enhance one's well-being such as friends, fulfilment and choice (Bell, Devecchi, Mc Guckin, & Shevlin, 2017). Poor transition for students with CN post-secondary when compared with their peers, reveals higher unemployment, decreased independence, and decreased quality of life (Carter, Brock, & Trainor, 2014; Meadows, Davies, & Beamish, 2014). However, if there is successful transition, positive outcomes lead to personal satisfaction, production and productivity (Jenaro et al., 2005).

The Aotearoa/New Zealand context. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, however, there is no legal obligation to undertake transition planning as there is in such countries as the United States where the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA) (2004) legislates mandatory transition planning. However, the New Zealand Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2015) has issued transition guidelines for those who are involved in the transitioning of students with CN with the focus on those leaving school. There is an acknowledgement that good transition matters especially for those with CN and that we have a responsibility to “get it right” (Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 2). Transition within education is informed by the New Zealand Disability Strategy (Ministry of Social Development, 2016) and Administrative Guidelines for Education – National Administration Guidelines (NAGs), specifically 1.6 (Ministry of Education, 2017). The focus of NAG 1.6 is to provide students with guidance and education around career options and to identify those students who are at risk of not being prepared for the transition when leaving school. Students with CN within this context, are those who are at risk at the time of leaving school. For students who are transitioning into secondary school, guidelines have been produced to support successful transition (Ministry of Education, 2010). This is a detailed document and yet there is only a small portion assigned to considering students with special needs transitioning to secondary school.

This study is interested in “getting it right” for students with CN in transition. One of the complexities for navigating and getting transition correct for students with CN transitioning into or out of secondary school, is that there are usually several stakeholders involved in the process (Kaehne & Beyer, 2014; Meadows et al., 2014). These include the current school staff, parents, students and specialists who gather around the student and then pass information to the next setting. In the next setting there are a new set of people for the student and family to relate to and work with. If transition to the next

setting for students with CN is to be successful, some of the practices have been identified that support transition include: an individualised and strengths-based approach (Hatfield et al., 2018); all stakeholders being part of the process (van Rens et al., 2018); clear formal records arriving in a timely fashion (Hatfield et al., 2018; Strnadová & Cumming, 2014); transition planning and coordination (Ravenscroft, Wazny, & Davis, 2017) ; and communication and collaboration between all stakeholders (Plotner, Mazzotti, Rose, & Teasley, 2018). These studies have identified that these practices are often missing from the transition process for students and this results in the transition not proceeding as smoothly as desired for the student with CN.

The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile. The NZYCP was developed by McLaughlin et al. (2017) and is based on core elements of The International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health for Children and Youth (ICF-CY) framework described by the World Health Organization (World Health Organisation, 2007). The ICF-CY was developed in response to dissatisfaction with the medical or deficit models of disability and the move towards more social and ecological models. The ICF-CY takes aspects of the medical, social and ecological models and presents a model of disability based around a biopsychosocial model (Peterson, 2005). The biopsychosocial model is viewed as the most complete way of conceptualizing human development and disability; combining medical, social and functional perspectives. The ICF-CY is an international framework that classifies disability from many perspectives and focusses on the functional effect of disability, the strengths and needs of the child/youth and how they participate in everyday settings.

The ICF-CY is a lengthy and complex document and the NZCYP was designed to capture the essential components of the ICF-CY and modify them for Aotearoa/New Zealand school settings. It is a toolkit to support teachers, families, and specialists to reflect on and organize their understanding of a child's strengths and limitations; sensory function; participation at school, home, and in the community; and interests and preferences. The NZCYP was developed in recognition that collaboration between members of the Individualised Education Planning (IEP) team is essential to planning for a student's education (McLaughlin, Budd, & Clendon, 2017).

Rationale for Study

There is limited international research about how to effectively engage all stakeholders in meaningful collaboration and planning (van Rens et al., 2018). When there is meaningful collaboration and planning there are improved transition outcomes for students with CN (Parker-Katz, Cushing, & Athamanah, 2018). There is also more research required around how to gather and collate information about the student in transition (Hatfield et al., 2018). There is a requirement that information gathered about the student is both strengths-based and individualised (Gauthier-Boudreault et al., 2017; Hatfield et al., 2018). When these practices are implemented satisfactorily, transition for the student with CN will have an increased chance of being effective (Hopwood, Hay, & Dyment, 2016).

Within the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand, there is a paucity of research around how to enable meaningful collaboration and planning, and information gathering for students with CN who are transitioning (Hart, Gaffney, & Hill, 2017; Higgins, 2015). The NZCYP has been employed in one pilot

research study (McLaughlin et al., 2017). The aim of this research is to begin to fill some of the research gaps around the NZCYP and to fill the gaps in the literature around successful transitions within an Aotearoa/New Zealand context. The specific gaps in transition practices that this research examines are around meaningfully engaging stakeholders in collaboration and planning. This is important as all perspectives are required to give a holistic and comprehensive depiction of the student (Carter et al., 2014; Strnadová & Cumming, 2014). This research aims to strengthen understanding around practice and usage of the NZCYP to be able to support students with CN and all those who work with them.

In this study, the NZCYP (McLaughlin et al., 2017) was utilised for a student entering secondary school and for a student leaving secondary school. The aim of this study was to gather participants perspectives about how effective the NZCYP was in enabling all stakeholders to work in a collaborative manner and whether this led to effective transition planning for the students with CN. Another purpose was to explore the effectiveness of the NZCYP as a tool for collating information about students with CN and whether this information supported successful transition.

Research Questions

The research explored the following questions:

1. In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful information gathering for adolescents and young adults with CN transitioning into or out of a secondary school?

2. In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful collaboration and planning for adolescents and young adults with CN transitioning into or out of a secondary school?
3. In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful transition for adolescents and young adults with CN transitioning into or out of a secondary school?

Participant perspectives

The research was conducted around the perceptions of those involved with using the NZCYP. In their simplest form, perceptions can be viewed as how we see things, but they are more complex than this as they involve the interconnectedness of both body and mind, and is how an individual interprets and experiences the world (Munhall, 2008). These perceptions were gathered with the use of focus groups to seek the experiences of two groups of participants. Perceptions are subjective and so it is possible that individuals may share an experience and yet see and interpret it differently.

Researcher positionality

The researcher brings to their research their background, interests and preferences (Gibbs, 2007). These need to be acknowledged in order to minimise bias in research.

As Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and Head of Department of Learning Support at a local High School, one of the most important tasks that I am involved in, is the transitioning of students with CN into and out of the school setting. Transition can be a time of great stress for families as they must come to terms with a new setting and once again explain

the specific needs of their children. One of the issues is the consistency of how information is gathered and transferred to new settings and this has an impact on the successfulness of the transition. This is especially so when the young person is unable to communicate this easily. Therefore, I am interested in using the NZCYP to consider whether it is suitable to support the transition of students with CN. The NZCYP has the potential to pass on meaningful information about the student. There is also the potential for stakeholders to use it in a collaborative way to plan for events such as transition in the young person's life.

Concepts and Terminology

This section outlines the theoretical framework that many research studies use to describe transitions. It is also the theoretical framework used in this study. An explanation about the different models of disability, including the biopsychosocial model is included and more details are given concerning ORS.

Frameworks for transition. A popular theoretical framework used in literature to describe transition is Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979, 1994). There is extensive literature and studies that have used Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to describe the process of transition for students with CN. Hirano, Rowe, Lindstrom, & Chan, 2018; Jacobs et al., 2018; Milsom, 2007; O'Toole, Hayes, & Mhathúna, 2014; Strnadová & Cumming, 2014; Strnadová et al., 2016; and Strnadová & Evans, 2013, are all examples of research that have used Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to explain transitions. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model examines how the growth and development of a child is influenced by the various systems that surround them

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994). This model can be used for examining the transitions that students with CN experience at school and into adult life (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016). It gives an idea as to the complexity of systems that a child with CN exists in and how these are influenced by external policies and forces. Bronfenbrenner’s model offers a holistic view of the student placing them central in the different systems that are impacting on them and that they are participating in (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016). The model used in transition for students with CN, can take into consideration the views of different stakeholders such as family members and schools and the structures and cultural settings that they find themselves in (Figure 1) (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016).

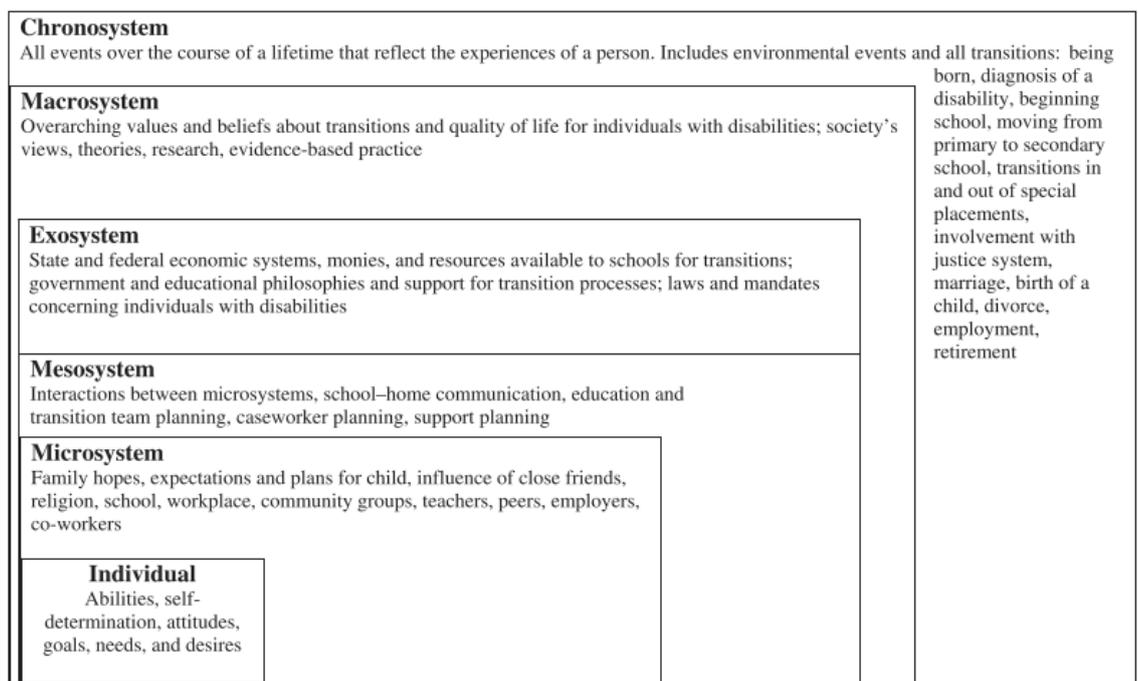


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model (1994). A model for viewing the transition of students with CN. Reprinted with permission from “Transitions for students with intellectual disability and/or autism spectrum disorder: Carer and teacher perspectives”, by I. Strnadová, T. Cumming and J. Danker, 2016, *Australasian Journal of Special Education*, 40 (2), p. 144. Copyright 2016 by Cambridge University Press.

When planning for a successful transition, Milsom (2007), has suggested that the relationships between and among these systems should be inspected before transition happens. When there are changes in one system around the child, then this will have an impact on their growth and development. A place to begin, is to assess whether the various groups within the microsystem agree about the transition. The microsystem addresses the interactions and relationships the student has with such groups as family, siblings, peers and school. It includes the hopes of the family, their expectations and plans. If there is agreement, then the outcomes for the student are improved (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016). For example, what are the expectations of the family and teachers with respect to transition within the current school and how does this compare with the prospective school? It is important that all participants in the process realise the different attitudes and ideas about transition as it progresses and that these are communicated. It is this communication that will lead to collaboration and effective planning and realisation of any plans made (Carter et al., 2014).

Strnadová and Cumming (2016) state that as transition progresses, the microsystem expands as there is an increase in the number of stakeholders involved. These relationships exist within broader systems in the community and the interactions between the various microsystems make up the mesosystem. Transition is an occasion when the student's proximal environment is being enlarged to include an increased number of environments which must interact with each other in the mesosystem. At each transition point, the mesosystem is modified for parents as they have new professionals that they become involved with (Strnadová & Evans, 2013). The contact between the

parents and the student's teachers is an example of this (Strnadová et al., 2016).

Strnadová et al. (2016), say that the student does not have direct communication with the exosystem, but it does exert an impact on them. It contains such factors such as economic systems, and these have an impact on transition as it determines how many resources may be available to schools and families to support transition. The macrosystem contains the beliefs and values that society has about people with CN and their transitions and quality of life. This will have an impact on what society is prepared to invest in transition processes, theories and research.

Overarching all of this is the chronosystem which encompasses all the transitions and developments that the child will go through in their lifespan. The chronosystem can also be used to consider all the changes to the environment that the individual exists within (Strnadová et al., 2016). An example given by Strnadová et al., (2016) of changing environments over time is the ability of businesses to incorporate students with CN within their workplaces. Over time, these placements have become increasingly difficult due to lack of funding and economic downturns in the economy (Strnadová & Cumming, 2014).

Models of disability. The different models that are used by society and individuals both determine attitudes and actions of those that are viewed as able towards those that are seen as disabled (Manago, Davis, & Goar, 2017). The prominent models that are used to define disability are the medical or deficit, and social models. The medical model views the person with a disability as being in deficit compared with the norm and therefore there is something that

can be fixed (Bingham, Clarke, Michielsens, & Van De Meer, 2013; Forhan, 2009). To have a disability is seen as tragedy and something to be mourned. The medical model has historically been the dominant approach to viewing disability. With this model the issue of disability becomes the problem for the individual (Fitzgerald, 2006). The social model of disability has challenged this concept by referring to disability as a construct that has been created by society (Coles, 2001). It is society that disables the individual by establishing barriers so that those with disability find it difficult to participate within society (Bingham et al., 2013).

The biopsychosocial approach. The biopsychosocial approach was developed to incorporate dynamic interactions between biology/medical, psychology and socio-environmental influences around illness (Engel, 1977). Engel (1977), proposed this model as an alternative to the biomedical model of disease. Engel wanted a model that was more holistic in its approach and able to describe the complex interactions of the development of disease within the context of the environment that a person is located (Figure 2). This model has been used within health, medicine, human development and to be an alternative model for disability. As has previously been mentioned, this approach is the basis for both the NZCYP and the ICF-CY on which the NZCYP is based (McLaughlin et al., 2017).

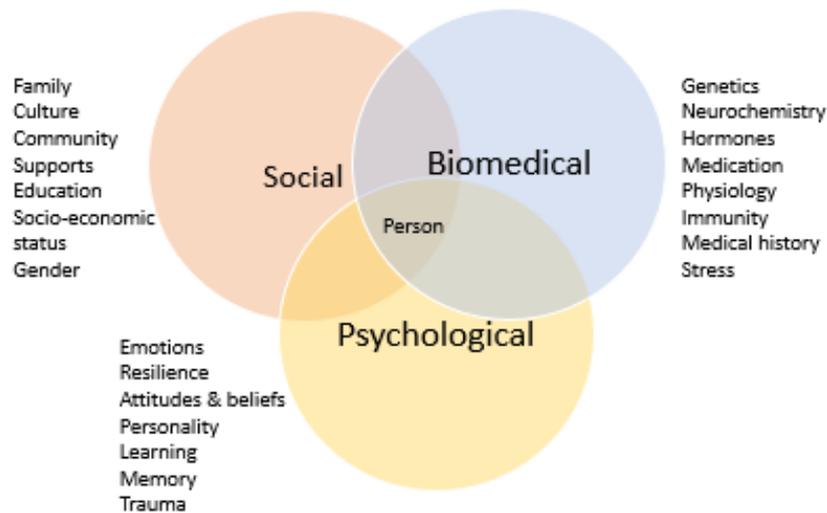


Figure 2. The biopsychosocial model (Engel, 1977). A model for viewing disability.

Ongoing resourcing scheme. For the purposes of this research, students with CN are those that qualify for the *Ongoing Resourcing Scheme* (ORS), through the Ministry of Education. ORS funding is used to provide specialist services and support for students with the very highest needs for learning support. These students have significant and ongoing difficulties with areas such as learning, vision, hearing, physical skills, language use and social communication (Ministry of Education, 2018). They receive funding to allow for specialist input (e.g., speech language therapy, occupational therapy), individual specialist teacher time and teacher aide support. This funding remains with the child throughout their schooling and applies to about 1% of all students in Aotearoa/New Zealand schools. Students who qualify for ORS are entitled to remain at school until the age of 21 years.

Thesis Outline

This thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter one has introduced the topic of transition and the context in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It has

presented the NZCYP and its background. The rationale for the study, research questions, participant perspectives, researcher positionality, concepts and terminology have all been stated. Chapter two reviews the literature around transition and individually examines five practices that support successful transition for a planning team of a child with CN. It concludes with reviewing the literature specifically relating to transition in Aotearoa/New Zealand and research using the NZCYP. Chapter three describes the methodology of the study, including details about the recruitment of participants, data collection and analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter four outlines the results from the study using a thematic analysis and excerpts from the transcripts of the focus groups. Chapter five discusses the findings in relation to the research questions and the literature. This chapter finishes with the trustworthiness and limitations of the study, implications and directions for future research, and a conclusion.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This review of literature focusses on evidence-based practices that support and assist with successful transitions for students with CN. These identified areas are an individualised and strengths-based approach (Hatfield et al., 2018); all stakeholders being part of the process (van Rens et al., 2018); clear formal records arriving in a timely fashion (Hatfield et al., 2018; Strnadová & Cumming, 2014); transition planning and co-ordination (Ravenscroft et al., 2017); and communication and collaboration between all stakeholders (Plotner et al., 2018). Subsequent to this, research about transition within Aotearoa/New Zealand will be reviewed. Finally, the literature on the NZCYP will be reviewed and a summary given.

Individualised and Strengths-based Planning

In accordance with Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979, 1994), successful transition planning places the individual central. When the individual is central to the process, transition planning can be student-focussed, strengths-based and responsive to addressing their individual needs (Hatfield et al., 2018).

Student voice. Student voice is an aspect that contributes to an individualised and strengths-based approach to planning. This was identified by Hatfield et al. (2018) in their study. This was an Australian study, that used a needs assessment to examine the transition process for adolescents on the autistic spectrum. They gathered data from the adolescents, their parents and professionals (n =162) using an online questionnaire. A predisposing factor that was identified by all groups as contributing towards successful transition was

the use of a student-focussed approach which was both individualised and strengths-based. As the adolescents were able to identify their strengths it helped their confidence to grow and their anxieties to decrease. Identifying strengths enabled the students to see themselves as successful.

There were similar findings for Cobb and Alwell (2009), in their systematic review of 31 scientifically based research studies. These reviews involved 859 youth and found support for the effectiveness of student-focussed planning in transition practices. The quantitative studies included in the systematic review were high quality in design and showed a very large effect size indicating that involving students in transition planning meetings helped to assist them with the development of skills to engage in planning for their futures (Allen, Test, Flowers, & Wood, 2001; Flannery et al., 2000; Powers et al., 2001; Van Reusen & Bos, 1994). This was in stark contrast to the themes that emerged from the qualitative studies that were analysed (Blackhouse & Rodger, 2004; Devlieger & Trach, 1999; Lehmann, Bassett, & Sands, 1999). Student-focussed planning, which held so much hope in quantitative studies, was shown to have deficits within qualitative studies. The suggestion given by Cobb and Alwell (2009), for these discrepancies, was that in the quantitative studies students and families were participating in prescribed programmes specifically designed to assist with transition. Prescribed programmes were not used in the qualitative studies which gave rise to reflect on how outcomes may have been different if transition programmes had been used. The qualitative studies revealed that on occasions students did not feel included or valued in the process of planning for their transition. An outcome of the review was to reveal ways to assist students with CN to become more involved. These ideas

included the inclusion of friends, peer advocates and mentors to support the student in the process (Cobb & Alwell, 2009).

When Kohler and Field (2003) conducted their systematic review about transition, they found similar findings. They found that studies showed that when the student was included in their IEP and their needs were heard and valued, that this was more likely to lead to effective transition. These studies revealed it is important for the student to be able to express their wants and needs as they transition and that others involved in this process need to be respectful of these voiced desires.

Cobb and Alwell (2009) and Kohler and Field (2003), are both systematic reviews of literature and are both older studies, however, more current studies also reveal similar results. In a qualitative study in the UK involving two children with Down's Syndrome who were transitioning to secondary school, the children's voices were elicited using pictures to communicate their likes and dislikes about school and rate these (Lightfoot & Bond, 2013). Being able to be involved in this way, improved the transition for the students. In one example, the girl was able to share her dislike of large classrooms that echoed, and this was considered at the new school. The children were viewed as stakeholders in the process. This study is particularly interesting because both children had communication difficulties and yet their voices were heard.

However, there are studies that have shown the opposite, where post-transition outcomes have not been successful despite the inclusion of the student in the process. For example, Kaehne and Beyer (2014) in a qualitative study in the UK, reviewed the nature and content of 44 person-centred

transition plans and conducted telephone interviews with the families who were involved with the programme. They found that whilst practice was good in the planning process as students and parents could articulate their needs and preferences, this did not necessarily result in good outcomes post-transition. The students were at the centre of the process, their strengths were acknowledged, and their voices were heard and yet transition was unsatisfactory. The researchers felt that student and parent desires were unable to be met because of the lack of well-equipped services for the student post-school. There was a lack of resources to be able to support the aspirations of the student and their families.

Students are individuals. The transition process should also be individualised as no two students with CN are alike. A finding in the study by Hatfield et al., (2018) was that there was an identified need to have individualised planning as the students were not a homogenous group. Similarly, Cobb and Alwell (2009) in their review, also discovered that for students transitioning out of school, there was a tendency to make them fit into existing programmes rather than creating a programme that was suited to the student's individual needs. This was also the case for a qualitative study involving 44 youth with a range of ethnicities in Bradford, England. Researchers discovered that those with CN were placed where there was availability, rather than taking into consideration the wants of the individual (Small, Raghavan, & Pawson, 2013). Likewise, a mixed methods study involving 69 parents of students in transition in Ireland, revealed that the students were considered as a homogenous group, and this in itself created a barrier to good transition (Doyle, Mc Guckin, & Shevlin, 2017). In a Canadian qualitative study, semi-structured

interviews with 14 parents revealed that for their children with CN, there was a lack of understanding of the young person's needs. This made it difficult to tailor solutions for their individual needs (Gauthier-Boudreault et al., 2017). Similarly, a qualitative study based in Ireland, involving 41 students with ASD leaving school, found they were a heterogeneous group and that individualised support and attention is required to assist this group with successful transition (Bell et al., 2017).

Catering for individual needs for students with CN transitioning to secondary school is also important. Maras & Aveling (2006), in their research in England, found that successful transition involved being able to tailor support for the individual needs of the students involved. A study based in Wales, where 14 children, their caregivers, and teachers were interviewed, revealed that the children transitioning to secondary school each needed individualised support. This was because some had quite complex needs whilst others had less complex needs and required less support (Brewin & Statham, 2011). This was also the situation in another study in England for six students transitioning to secondary schools. Interviews revealed that one of the factors contributing to the success was the individualised support that was given to meet their needs (Neal & Frederickson, 2016).

When individualised transition planning happens, it is important to base this on the student's strengths and not just their support needs. Their strengths and needs should be included and considered for the context that they are transitioning to (Hatfield et al., 2018). The foundations for this model is person-centred planning, where the emphasis has changed from deficit thinking, to focussing on the student's hopes, dreams, gifts and abilities (Michaels &

Ferrara, 2009). Thoma, Rogan and Baker (2001) in their qualitative study comprising of eight students with CN, their parents, and teachers, explored transition for students leaving school in the United States. Researchers discovered that if students were viewed with a deficit-focus that this impacted on the possibility of that student having a typical adult life. Likewise, Carter et al. (2014) conducted a study in the Midwest, United States, involving rural, semi-rural and city secondary schools. This study involved 134 students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who were assessed by their parents and teachers. Every student, regardless of their disability, had strengths as well as needs, and these strengths were able to be built upon to support their transition. Correspondingly, a six-month ethnography in Aotearoa/New Zealand involving three young men with significant disability found that whilst those with CN have capabilities, they may not be noticed, or they may be interpreted differently by separate groups that work with them (Hart et al., 2017). These young men had limited verbal skills, and yet they were all able to participate in the research given the correct supports. Some took photos using cell phones and another used visuals to communicate. One of the strengths of this study was that it enabled the young men to participate and contribute to the research about their lives. The way in which the research was conducted enabled each of the young men to have a voice.

Summary. The literature examined in this section has shown the importance of including a student in their transition and trying to find ways to elicit participation and involvement regardless of level of need and communication difficulties. Whether these wants and needs can be realised in

transition is an issue as the setting that they are transitioning to may be under resourced and unable to meet their needs and aspirations.

All students with CN are individuals and they are not a homogenous group, but there is a tendency to want to make young people fit into existing programmes rather than tailor the programme for the individual. This is especially the situation for those leaving secondary school.

Every student with CN has needs, but as well they each have strengths which can be utilised and celebrated rather than focussing on the deficits which is how society so often defines them. By focussing on strengths and capabilities, the student is seen as a unique individual.

Involvement of Stakeholders

The main stakeholders involved in any transition planning are the student, the family, the school and other professionals who come alongside the student to support. Conversations about transitions between the old and new microsystems happen between the different stakeholders at the mesosystem level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979, 1994).

All stakeholders are needed. In a systematic review of 30 descriptive studies, van Rens et al. (2018) identified that it was important to ensure that all stakeholders were involved in the transition process. They found that information shared from all stakeholders, especially from the parents and student, can help to contribute to a smooth transition. These interactions of current stakeholders at the mesosystem level is important in order to begin the conversation with the new microsystems that the student and their family will find themselves in (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016). All stakeholders need to be

involved as they have different perspectives about the student and these need to be brought together (van Rens et al., 2018). Each stakeholder has a different viewpoint of the student and these inform expectations about transition and the student's strengths and needs (Carter et al., 2014). Carter et al. (2014), showed this by surveying teachers and parents independently about their perceptions of student's strengths and needs. Teachers and parents gave similar ratings on only 48% of all the rated items. The major reason for difference was that either the teacher or parent did not know or thought it was inappropriate for them to give a rating. The main reason for this, was that there were questions relating to the different environments such as home, community and school. Teachers were unable to answer about the student at home and likewise, parents could not answer every aspect about school. Both teachers and parents had an understanding about the student that was unique to them and the setting that they experienced them.

Parents are key stakeholders and have insights to their child as they have been with them since the beginning. This gives them a unique and special perspective about their child. This means that parents are often the best advocates for their child and within the microsystems that they are involved (Billington, McNally, & McNally, 2000). In an Australian study, 14 mothers from rural and city schools participated in focus groups about their children and home and school working together (Reupert, Deppeler, & Sharma, 2015). One of the findings from this study was that it was important for schools to recognise and elicit the expertise that parents have about their children. Even though this is the case, parents may not be fully included as stakeholders.

Barriers to family involvement. The research on family involvement often examines the barriers that prevent family participation. One such study was undertaken by Strnadová and Cumming (2014) in New South Wales, Australia. In this study, 75 teachers from different schools, 37 primary and 38 secondary schools, were given surveys to complete about the transition practices in their schools. Those that responded to how transition between primary and secondary could be improved were all in agreement that the role of the parent in transitioning was incredibly important. However, there were barriers, and these were identified as: parental distrust of the school; family life circumstances; and workloads of teaching staff. They also identified that some parents were collaborative, and others were incredibly difficult to work with.

Research using the survey developed by Strnadová and Cumming (2014), was carried out in the states of Texas, California and North Carolina (Rodriguez, Cumming, & Strnadová, 2017). Researchers received online survey responses from 167 participants. The respondents also saw the importance of family involvement at all levels of transition as they are one of the key stakeholders in the process. These teacher participants were involved at primary and secondary level, and the barriers to parental involvement were like the original study. These included parental unwillingness; parents not having sufficient information; insufficient communication; inconsistency between home and school; and lack of time for teachers.

In another study, Hirano et al. (2018) conducted a meta-synthesis of qualitative research conducted around transition from secondary school. The researchers analysed 22 articles involving 405 interviews with parents. These interviews were focussed specifically around barriers to family involvement and

the analysis revealed they fell into three categories of family, school and adult services. For the family, barriers included stresses such as caring for their child and work schedules, lack of resources, lack of cultural capital and low self-efficacy. The barriers created by schools were summarised as a disregard for the characteristics and values of the family and student, a lack of accessible information and materials for families, late planning and not being focussed on the student's strengths and interests. The adult services that provided transition also showed a lack of seeing the student from a strengths-base and having low expectations, a lack of viable post-school options, a lack of respect, and an acknowledgment and value of the role of parents in the success of their children due to bureaucratic systems. These findings about the lack of focus on the student's strengths from the school and adult services, is particularly troubling considering the research around successful transition requiring students to be viewed as having strengths.

Barriers for other stakeholders. There is also a need to include stakeholders at the next setting so that the knowledge from the family and the current school can be passed on. When 75 schools in New South Wales, Australia were surveyed about the current practices for transitioning students with CN to secondary school, the necessity of having the commitment of all stakeholders was noted (Strnadová & Cumming, 2014). There was an acknowledgement that communication between primary and secondary schools needed improvement. In a further study involving interviews with teachers (n=13), it was identified that including stakeholders between school settings was usually limited by lack of time and poor communication (Strnadová et al., 2016). Strnadová and Cumming (2014) also looked at transitions out of

secondary school and they acknowledged that all stakeholders were important for this process to be successful. Some schools found working with providers outside of school difficult, and this was identified as being due to a lack of resources including money and time.

Summary. It is important that all stakeholders are involved when a student with CN is transitioning either into or out of secondary school. Each person currently involved with the student has a unique perspective of the student's strengths and needs and these need to be integrated by the current settings or microsystems, in order to be passed on to the future settings.

The stakeholders at the new settings need to be included so that they can begin to understand the student and begin to transition them to the new setting. However, there is evidence that not all stakeholders find it easy to be included. This is particularly so for families but can also be an issue between current and future settings.

Clear and Timely Records

One of the main reasons for all stakeholders being involved is for the gathering and sending of detailed information about the student with CN in transition. Hatfield et al. (2018) identified that an enabling factor for students with CN transitioning to a new setting was clear formal documentation. This is another way that enables the microsystems around the student to interact at the mesosystem level (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016).

Issues with sharing information. However, it has been identified that the exchange of information is often late, and requests are needed to gain the information. This information when it arrives can be disorganised (Strnadová &

Cumming, 2014) or may not be passed onto the appropriate teachers and staff (Ng, Hill, & Rawlinson, 2016). The systematic literature review previously mentioned by van Rens et al. (2018), revealed a similar situation finding that there were gaps in exchanging information and when information was exchanged it tended to be generic in nature rather than specific to the child. As has already been identified, students with CN are far from homogenous and need to be viewed as individuals (Bell et al., 2017; Cobb & Alwell, 2009; Doyle et al., 2017; Gauthier-Boudreault et al., 2017; Hatfield et al., 2018; Maras & Aveling, 2006; Neal & Frederickson, 2016; Small, Raghavan, & Pawson, 2013).

Gathering information. Any information gathered needs to be meaningful and gathered from many sources. Gathering information from multiple sources, allows for a more complete and holistic portrayal of the student in transition (Carter et al., 2014).

A qualitative study conducted in Aotearoa/New Zealand investigating the transition of three twice-exceptional students to high school, found there were difficulties for the students when they transitioned (Ng et al., 2016). One of the major reasons cited was the inadequacies of the transfer of information between schools. All the schools involved showed a commitment to the transfer of information, but there was variation in the quality and depth of the information provided by the sending schools. For these students to transition successfully there needed to be timely, accurate and complete records that detailed ways to support learning, handed over to the next setting.

Information for families. Studies have also revealed that it is not only information being passed on to the next setting that is problematic (Gauthier-

Boudreault et al., 2017). There are also problems for parents receiving timely and full information about the transition process from the next setting. For example, in Ireland, 42 parents were interviewed about their experiences of transitioning their children with CN to secondary school and reported that they found it difficult to gain information about available supports for their children in the next setting (Scanlon et al., 2016). One parent articulated this by saying, *“I’m not asking for the moon, but a bit more information.”* (p. 54). They saw information as critical and not receiving information about such things as resourcing for their children caused a great deal of frustration and distress. This feeling was reiterated in studies that have previously been mentioned by Strnadová et al. (2016), where parents were interviewed about post-school options. Of the 14 parents interviewed, half were dissatisfied with the amount of information that was available. The lack of information for parents is one of the identified barriers for them to being included as a necessary stakeholder (Hirano, Rowe, Lindstrom, & Chan, 2018).

Disseminating information. There are also studies which have suggested some solutions to the problem concerning information sharing. For example, in the study conducted by Nuske et al. (2019), results from the review of 27 studies from four different continents (Australia, North America, Africa and Europe) identified that teachers had a lack of knowledge and understanding about the student with CN when they arrived in their classes as information had not been passed on to them. A strategy for teachers that was suggested to help with this was the clear documentation around important information about the student in a one-page summary. The one-page summary could include information concerning communication, behaviour, strengths and interests and

be compiled by the sending school staff and parents and passed to the next school. For parents, a strategy that was strongly recommended was a transition organisation binder. This was for the purposes of both keeping information that they had gained about transition in order, and for being able to have information available to give stakeholders about their child as required.

Tools for collating information. Some studies have investigated specific tools and their use to collate information to be able to give a picture about the student. In a review of literature of 16 journal articles involving students with ASD in transition, Richter, Pop-Roch, & Clément (2019) found that studies suggested that having a document that followed the student through their schooling would be useful. They identified that in the United States this was the IEP document. However, in other countries, the IEP document is not mandated for and, therefore, there is no formalised process in which this can be monitored (Tso & Strnadová, 2017). In France, the *Projet Personnalisé Scolarisation (PPS)* (translation: individual schooling project) is a document that follows students with CN through their school career (Richter, Popa-Roch, & Clément, 2019).

In another study, White and Rae (2016), showed that person-centred reviews were able to yield information for schools that was in-depth and gave a rich picture of the child. The team approach was able to gather holistic information that everyone had contributed to. The receiving settings appreciated the information that they received about each child.

Portugal has mandatorily used the ICF-CY since 2008 as a tool for special education assessment and decision making about students' functioning

profiles. There have been studies about its usage within the context of transition. One study analysed 198 IEPs and the results indicated that the ICF-CY gave a complete and broad portrayal of the child and could be potentially a tool that could be used to transfer information between sectors (Silveira-Maia, Lopes-dos-Santos, & Sanches-Ferreira, 2017). In a scoping review of 25 international studies about the use of the ICF-CY, one of its identified strengths was the biopsychosocial approach. This enabled holistic information to be gathered and this was able to inform transition (Nguyen et al., 2018). The biopsychosocial model (Engel, 1977) is similar to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994) in the ways that they keep the person at the centre and look at how the different environments interact with that person.

There is also the Transition Planning Inventory (TPI) which is used within the United States. This is used to gather information for assessment and planning purposes when transitioning students with CN to post-school settings (Carter et al., 2014). The TPI is one of the any commercial tools that are available within The United States that meets the legal requirements for transition planning (Patton & Clark, 2014). This tool is designed to gather information which identifies the strengths, interests and needs of the student in transition.

Summary. Information is important to ensure smooth transitions for students with CN. There is often an issue with the timeliness and completeness of the transfer of information between settings. There are also issues around information and its availability for parents to find out more about the transition process and the next setting. There are tools that have been developed that can

help towards the process of passing information to the next setting that give a holistic picture of the student in transition.

Transition Planning and Co-ordination

For transition to take place, there needs to be a plan and someone co-ordinating the plan (Scanlon et al., 2016). Having a plan and co-ordination enables participants within microsystems to know how, when and where they will meet at the mesosystem level (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016). A plan can be formulated as all stakeholders gather and bring together information about the student in transition.

Issues in planning and co-ordination. There are, however, some issues involved with planning and co-ordination. In a qualitative study involving 306 parents from 8 European countries (Cyprus, Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece, Romania, the Netherlands, the UK and Spain), the researchers gathered data and analysed the factors associated with successful transition for students with CN (Ravenscroft et al., 2017). One of the four principal components was that there needed to be planning and co-ordination and that this needed to start as early as possible. They found that planning needed to happen before, during and after transition. This planning needed to be careful and detailed with thorough information and regular reviews of the plan, with all involved in the plan if there was to be good transition. Planning meant that there would be clear procedures, clearness around roles, clarity of vision and motivation to include all stakeholders including children. This enables a platform from which microsystems can come together in the mesosystem in order to begin transitioning the student to the new setting (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016).

Strnadová et al. (2016), also concurred with this study especially around the fact that transition should begin as early as possible. In this study, teachers believed that this should begin in Year 8, which is the first year of secondary school in Australia. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, the first year of secondary school is year 9.

In the study conducted by Hatfield et al. (2018) around autistic students transitioning out of school in Australia, it was identified that parents, students and professionals that there needed to be a plan. This plan required clear goals, structure and a defined process. However, many adolescents and parents identified that there was no formal transition planning process in place. They also identified that co-ordination of the team was essential and yet this was one of the biggest challenges. Parents and adolescents stated that it was important for everyone to be working together, but having multiple agencies, and the pressures of lack of time, meant that it was difficult to bring everyone together.

Solutions for planning and co-ordination. The problem with co-ordination and planning is not unique when it comes to transition. The survey conducted by Strnadová & Cumming (2014) in Australia with teaching staff, identified the appointment of a staff member in school to be responsible for transition as a possible improvement for students with CN. Rodriguez et al. (2017), replicated this survey with teachers in the United States and found that there was confusion over who was responsible for transition and planning, and recommended that a dedicated person should be appointed to undertake this role.

Parents also want better co-ordination in transition and planning. In the study conducted by Scanlon et al. (2016), parents were frustrated as they were also unsure who was responsible for the transition process. In line with the other studies, parents in this research wanted to see a streamlined approach to transition between schools by having a single contact person who would be responsible to contact with everyone involved. Nuske et al. (2019), also identified in their systematic review that having a transition facilitator would be helpful for parents as a single point of contact throughout the transition process. Likewise, in another systematic review of 14 studies, students leaving school with CN found that when there were many different professionals involved in the process there needed to be co-ordination of services. Overall, parents wanted continuous support for their children throughout their lives and thought that there could be agencies that journeyed with them through school and then support planning for post-school changes (Jacobs et al., 2018).

Summary. Research has identified that planning and co-ordination are necessary for a smooth transition. Studies have identified that there is often no dedicated person to manage transitions. Having a dedicated person, usually based within school, is identified as being a solution for this issue. They would be responsible for transitions for all students and this would help families as they would only have one person to deal with for all their transition issues for their child.

Communication and Collaboration

Communication and collaboration are the key to individualised strengths-based planning for students, involving all stakeholders, gathering of clear and timely information and the process of planning and co-ordinating the transition

process. If there is frequent communication and a high level collaboration between all parties, then the involvement of stakeholders will be facilitated (Plotner et al., 2018). When groups communicate and collaborate they are able to help the student in transition to be able to plan and set goals for the future (Stewart, 2011).

Importance of collaboration. Collaboration is a process involving participation between people, groups and organisations working together and forming relationships to achieve an agreed goal (Kochhar-Byrant, 2008). Within a transition context, this involves a complex web of teacher, family, student, and specialist services that are currently involved with the student with CN and those that are becoming involved with the student. Kochhar-Bryant and Heishman (2010), postulated that there are six indicators that show what is involved with collaboration. These are new relationships among people; sharing of resources (people and other); trust among people working together in a way that all are equals and peers; shared responsibility for outcomes; shared decision making and accountability; and there are specific results or changes.

In an Australian study, there was a critical review of literature to ascertain the definition of collaboration, barriers to collaboration, and effective collaboration between occupational therapists and educators. After comprehensive searching and review, nine research articles were reviewed. Common features used to define collaboration included goal setting and planning with team members; sharing information; discussing problems; and learning from others (Kennedy & Stewart, 2011).

In an online survey conducted in South Carolina, 427 high school special education teachers and direct-service transition providers were questioned about roles, frequency of communication and collaboration. There was a positive, significant correlation between these variables. As the understanding of each other's roles increased, the communication improved and as this improved, the collaboration strengthened (Plotner et al., 2018). Collaboration and communication assist a team to work cohesively towards planning a successful transition for students both into and out of high school. Collaboration and communication assist the members of the old and new microsystems around the student to be able work together within the mesosystem (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016).

Collaboration and successful transition. Stewart (2009) examined literature about transition and concluded that collaboration was the way to be able to build capacity so that successful transition would occur. In transitioning a student into secondary school, collaboration between the old and new school, the family, the student and any other support agencies is required. As a student leaves school, the secondary school, family and student work in collaboration, forming new relationships with other agencies that will support a student post-school. (Stewart, 2009).

This concept was supported in a review of 39 qualitative and quantitative research studies which examined the barriers and facilitators to children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) transitioning (Fontil et al., 2019). This study concluded that professional, teachers and parents all agreed that collaborative practices were best to help a student transition. This collaboration happens between settings and over time (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016), re-emphasising

the importance of the ecological model, of the different systems interacting with each other and the overarching chronosystem.

Developing successful collaboration. As has been addressed in the previous section, there are many barriers that can prevent parents from becoming involved in the transition process. These also impact on the quality of collaboration that the family can develop in transition. There are also issues in the quality of involvement between school sectors as a student transitions (Noonan, Morningstar, & Gaumer Erickson, 2008). This section will address some ways to develop successful collaboration.

In Strnadová and Cumming's (2014) survey, 63 schools responded to the question about home-school collaboration. Home-school collaboration was highlighted as being important in the transition process. The respondents identified that their current practices included IEP meetings, phone calls and email communication. The respondents suggested a number of ideas for improving collaboration and these included: (1) empowering parents, (2) keeping parents informed and making them welcome, (3) increasing parents' involvement and improving communication between home and school, (4) developing training programmes for parents, and (5) advocating for parents.

In the survey by Rodriguez et al., (2017), 108 schools responded to the question about home-school collaboration. Improving communication was the main idea suggested to improve collaboration. The major strategies suggested by school to improve communication were better information sharing, and using email and messaging to make information more available. Some suggested providing information in languages other than English and that translators

should be readily available. Other suggestions were systemic changes such as involving principals and a dedicated liaison in communication, and giving teachers release time to be able to nurture collaboration.

Parents also have opinions about how to improve collaboration. In the study conducted by Zeitlin and Curcic (2014), twenty parents from the Midwestern parts of the United States were interviewed about their experiences with IEPs and transition planning. The parents felt the meetings were more about compliance than collaboration and the result was that the meetings had become highly depersonalised. Their suggestions to improve this situation were to increase collaboration through better communication. This agrees with the findings by Strnadová and Cumming (2014), and Rodriguez et al., (2017). Another finding that aligns with these studies is the empowering of parents. Zeitlin and Curic (2014), found that parents wanted to be acknowledged as equals with the other professionals at the meeting and viewed as knowledgeable about their child. Therefore, they could be included as valuable members to help with decision making and problem solving and so become more active members within the meeting. They also expressed that it would be useful if the language used less jargon and was more understandable. Rodriguez et al., (2017), found the need to provide information in other languages and this is a factor to be considered along with less jargon and simpler language.

Another study Gershwin-Mueller & Buckley, (2014) conducted in a western state of the United States, interviewed 20 fathers about their experiences with IEP meetings and how they would improve collaboration. The first theme that emerged from this group was the importance of taking the time

to build relationships with each other. This enabled discussions to be more amicable and solution focussed. If there were disagreements, these were easier to be worked through if there were relationships with educators. Lack of parental trust was identified as a barrier to family involvement by Strnadová and Cumming (2014), and, building relationships will help to overcome this. However, their study also identified that a lack of time for teachers was one of the barriers to successfully engaging with parents, and relationships take time to build. The second factor was that there needed to be regular communication which was open and honest as this built the relationships that enabled collaboration. Practical ways to develop communication were checking in with the teacher at drop-off and pick-up time, email, phone calls and communication diaries. Their final suggestion was that parent voices needed to be heard so that they felt included in meetings and not excluded. If the parent voice was heard and listened to then this helped with diminishing conflict and increased collaboration. As has already been identified, the voice of the parents is important as they need to be recognised as the experts about their children (Reupert et al., 2015).

Developing collaboration between transition settings. There is also a requirement for collaboration between primary and secondary schools and secondary and post-school providers. In research conducted in Tasmania, Australia, Hopwood et al. (2016), interviewed 12 teachers from primary and secondary schools about their perceptions about transitions of children from primary to secondary. They identified that there needed to be improved communication and collaboration between the two sectors. The authors suggested that networking was the solution to how this could be achieved as

this would develop and maintain professional relationships between schools. Few schools have such links and networking should become a priority to ensure smooth transitions (Hopwood et al., 2016).

This lack of collaboration, was also identified in a review that synthesized 27 studies of transitions for students with ASD, from primary to secondary schools (Nuske et al., 2019). It was identified that collaboration and co-ordination between schools was often difficult. Staff did not have time to get involved in the transition and for some it was not a priority. Solutions to increase collaboration included team transition planning with the pre- and post-school teams, and the family to talk about the student, setting goals and discussing how the transition would proceed. There needed to be recognition from schools that this was important by giving teachers the time to be able to implement and act on this. Developing ways to informally communicate with each other about the student on a regular basis was also seen as a way to develop collaboration.

Tools to support collaboration. One factor that has been identified to support collaboration are tools and processes. This is particularly so when there are many perspectives to bring together (Budd, 2016). There is research about different tools that are available to support communication and collaborative efforts.

Nguyen et al. (2018) in their review of 25 studies considering the use of the ICF-CY as a tool to aid transition, concluded that it did facilitate transdisciplinary processes and that its common language enabled improved collaboration and communication.

Another study, by White and Rae (2016), focussed around a process that used a person-centred review for students in transition. This review is a process that uses a visual medium to gather combined information about the student with CN. The mixed methods study took place in a London borough in the UK and involved 16 students and their families. The research revealed a process that enabled collaboration by incorporating multiple perspectives, parents feeling included and equal with professionals, relationships being developed, and a shared understanding and consensus about the outcomes of the review.

Summary. Communication and collaboration are key to all stakeholders being actively involved in transition planning for the student with CN. There are several solutions that are offered by parents and schools as to how to improve these aspects. These included empowering and including parents, sharing information in a variety of ways, developing relationships and using tools to support collaboration. If these are implemented, then transition for the student with CN would be more successful as they leave old microsystems and enter new ones. Overall, collaborative practices take time to develop but are proven to be the best practice for a student transitioning with CN.

Transition in Aotearoa/New Zealand

There is limited research relating to transition within Aotearoa/New Zealand. What research there is about transition into and out of secondary school in Aotearoa/New Zealand will now be considered, followed by research around the NZCYP.

Transition into secondary school. In the Aotearoa/New Zealand study conducted by Higgins (2015), factors that were supportive for students with CN,

families and teachers as students transitioned into secondary school were investigated. Using questionnaire and interview data, four interacting factors were identified as supporting good transition. These features were that there was someone taking deliberate responsibility for the transition; transition was conducted in a timely and purposeful fashion; there was strategic transition knowledge and practice; and support was available for targeted transition. Higgins (2015) found that these helpful transition features were usually strongest within management of the secondary school, while classroom teachers did not necessarily feel comfortable about students with CN in their classes. Information about the student was not always available for them and it was felt that teachers needed support to learn how to support students with CN. The timely and complete transfer of information to support successful transition, is something that has already been mentioned from the study by Ng et al. (2016) in the section about clear and timely records. With deficits in information transfer, comes situations such as teachers not understanding the different learning needs and strategies. This can lead to disengagement and a lag in learning (McGee, Ward, Gibbons, & Harlow, 2003).

In a study about ASD and transition to secondary school in Aotearoa/New Zealand, (Hamilton & Wilkinson, 2016), five parents were interviewed about the transition experience for their children. Parents reported the stress of managing the transition for their children and the need to be advocates and proactive in the process. A key factor in pre- and post-transition success was good and ongoing communication between home and school. This need for communication and collaboration was concurred by Dobson and Gifford-Bryan (2014). They used a collaborative consultation model as they

supported transition from a special school setting into the mainstream for two students. The strength of using this model was that there was the ability to be flexible in the transition and respond to needs, wants and concerns of all stakeholders involved.

Finally, another study based in a South Island city found some similarities as previous studies for the three students as they transitioned to secondary school. The key aspects that provided successful transition was once again found to be the communication and information sharing within and between the participants. The other two key components were the need for support structures, and empathy towards those involved with the experience of transition (Wilson, 2007).

Transition out of secondary school. Gladstone (2014), found that when students with CN transition out of school in Aotearoa/New Zealand, they have limited opportunities in post school education, employment and social networking. He felt that government policies enabled this to happen and this restricted students with CN to vocational day programmes. A recommendation from this study was that the Education Review Office should review transition processes within schools for students with CN. In a study previously mentioned, Hart et al., (2017), involving three disabled youth who had recently left school, found that factors that led to unsuccessful transition included insufficient trialling of post-school options and a lack of collaboration between stakeholders. The lack of trialling options was evidence of generic practices that were being undertaken and resulted in a lack of opportunities post-school for the students. In contrast, a case study of a transitions scheme in the South Island, (Irving, 2013), resulted in successful transitions as it focussed on individual strengths

rather than limitations. Another reason for the success was the use of a co-ordinator who was able to communicate and collaborate with the family and the student. This process helped to facilitate needs and generated opportunities. In a report prepared after 37 consultations with students and their families post-transition, it was found that consultation with families and the young people was happening too late, families were struggling to understand the system, and there were difficulties with co-ordination between the various stakeholders (Shanks, 2016).

Summary. The research examined from Aotearoa/New Zealand concurs with several international research studies around transition practices. These include having a person who is responsible for and knowledgeable about transition, clear and timely information, communication and collaboration, strengths-based view of the student and inclusion of parents.

The NZCYP – a tool to aid transition. There has been one research study conducted around the NZCYP toolkit (McLaughlin et al., 2017). In this study the NZCYP was trialled in three different educational settings; a special school, an early intervention centre, and an educational resource centre. A total of 7 teams that were working with children with CN were involved. It was used with preschool children through to adolescents for a variety of situations. The focus of this study was the piloting of the toolkit and questions about how it was used, its usefulness in educational planning and social validity were asked. From this research, revisions were made, and the toolkit was updated.

There are some key points from this study that are pertinent for this research. Firstly, the researchers discovered that the NZCYP was not

necessarily used in a collaborative way or for planning purposes even though this was the purpose that they intended for the toolkit. They also discovered that participants found it useful for organising and collating information. Some of this information was previously undocumented, unknown or not considered. This was particularly so for information regarding specific and different contexts. The researchers also found that there was confusion over the toolkit and its purpose. Some participants thought that it was an assessment tool rather than being a tool for collating information. Also, some of the settings and centres that were involved with the research were unsure how to include families. Other families who were involved found some of the terms that were used within the NZCYP unclear and they felt overwhelmed by the process. Finally, it gave practitioners a new perspective on the students as they considered areas of functioning that they had not previously considered.

One recommendation from the research was that the NZCYP might be useful within the context of transition. The NZCYP was seen to have the potential to be used to develop and foster collaboration and to be used as a tool to collate and gather information. It was also seen to gather information that was holistic and strengths-based about the student. These reasons make the use of the NZCYP as a tool to transition a student with CN into or out of secondary school a useful project.

This study proposes that using the NZCYP will strengthen research around this tool in a transition context and to add to the general body of literature around tools that gather and collate information; enhance collaboration and planning; and assist in transition of students with CN.

Summary

The review of literature has focussed on five elements that can inform supportive transition practices for students with CN either entering or leaving secondary school. Communication and collaboration are identified as essential between all stakeholders for successful transition. Literature has identified that engaging all stakeholders in meaningful ways to collaborate for transition planning is difficult. Also, the process requires the collation of individualised and strengths-based information in a clear and formalised way. In some countries, there are mandated ways to collect information. Even if there are mandated ways to collect data, this task is still problematic for stakeholders. There are also issues around planning and the co-ordination of the tasks of transition. There are gaps in literature around ways to engage stakeholders in collaboration and gather holistic information about students. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, there is no mandated process or set formalised document to be able to gather information for transition. The aim of this study is to use the locally developed NZCYP to see if it assists with successful transition and consider if it supports the processes of collaboration, planning and gathering information which have been identified as supporting transition for students with CN. The next chapter details the methodology, including the methods used, participant selection, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter three: Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology used in this study. Firstly, the research questions are restated. Then the research design and the rationale for its use are outlined. The recruitment of participants, data collection and data analysis procedures are then described. Finally, the place of the researcher and ethical considerations are discussed.

Research Questions

The research explored the following questions:

1. In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful information gathering for adolescents and young adults with CN transitioning into or out of a secondary school?
2. In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful collaboration and planning for adolescents and young adults with CN transitioning into or out of a secondary school?
3. In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful transition for adolescents and young adults with CN transitioning into or out of a secondary school?

Methodological Approach

A qualitative research methodology was adopted for this study.

Qualitative research has been defined as “a systematic approach to understanding qualities, or the essential nature, of a phenomenon within a particular context” (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005). Qualitative methods are particularly useful when: (a) there is an emphasis on individualised outcomes; (b) information is required about people

or programmes; (c) unique people and diverse situations are being examined; and (d) there is no instrument available that can adequately measure programme outcomes. These criteria are highly pertinent when conducting research related to children with CN (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004). When a child or young adult with CN is in transition, it is a very individualised process. Students with CN, their families and school situations are also very diverse groups. Qualitative methods provide a platform to explore and capture their individual experiences.

Phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is a qualitative approach that uses an interpretive paradigm to seek to understand the perspectives of participants and takes their subjective views and experiences and finds meaning in them (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). Phenomenology investigates an experience (or phenomenon) to try and gain the meaning of the experience from the perspective of those who have experienced it (Creswell, 2014; Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004).

The experience at the centre of this project was the use of the NZCYP as a tool for assessing strengths and needs of a child in transition and how this assisted with collecting data, collaboration, family involvement and a successful transition. As the aim of the research was to gain the perspective of the participants and their use of the NZCYP, phenomenology was considered a suitable methodology for this research.

Participants

Participants were eligible to participate if they were involved in a team that was supporting a student with CN in transition into or out of secondary education.

The principals of schools in the Dunedin locale were approached to gain permission for the study to take place in their schools. Letters outlining the project, its aims and the timeframes and commitments were given to the principals (Appendix A). Consent was gained from the two principals (Appendix B).

The principals were asked to approach their SENCO and to ask him/her to identify families that met the criteria for the study. The SENCO shared the Information Sheets and obtained consent from the families and then other members of the team to participate in the project (Appendices C, D, E, F).

Group 1 was transitioning a student in Year 8 into a secondary school. This group comprised of the SENCO, classroom teacher, both parents, teacher aide and occupational therapist. Group 2 was transitioning a student out of secondary school and consisted of two teachers and the mother of the student.

Participants were also required from the setting that the student transitioned to. This setting was established by consulting the team involved in the transition, to ascertain where the student would be transitioning to for the following year. It transpired that it was only possible to select participants for the next setting for the student transitioning into secondary school as the student transitioning out of secondary school was not leaving until the end of 2019. This made it impossible to be able to collect data within the timeframe of this

research. A letter outlining the project, its aims, timeframes and commitments was given to the principal of the secondary school where the student was transitioning to (Appendix G). Consent was gained from the principal for their school to be part of the project (Appendix I). The persons relevant were identified and information about the project was given to them and consent gained for participation (Appendices H, J). The post transition participants at the secondary school involved the specialist teacher and the mother of the student.

Training for participants. All of those involved in the project were required to participate in a training session to learn about the NZCYP and how to use it. This process took one hour and was semi-structured with time available for participants to ask any questions or seek clarification. A PowerPoint was used (Appendix L) and the participants had copies of the NZCYP to refer to. There was an opportunity to talk further about the project and the participants were able to ask questions.

The participants were then given the NZCYP to take away. They were asked to complete this individually for the student who was in transition. They then met as a team to collate the information and determine goals for the student.

Data Collection

Data was collected using semi-structured focus group interviews and some individual interviews. These methods are commonly used in qualitative research and align with a phenomenological approach (Breen, 2006).

Instruments. An interview guide was developed containing the questions for the focus group (Appendix M). This followed a funnel structure

which included introduction; broad opening questions; specific questions; and closing questions (Hennink et al., 2011). The introduction set the scene and the format for the session. This was followed by the opening question, which was broad and helped to build rapport with the group. This put everyone at ease. The participants were asked to explain who they were and their role in the team. The specific questions gathered data and narrowed in on the information that directly related to the research questions that the researcher was exploring. An example of a question was how they thought the NZCYP helped them with collaboration. The closing question was designed to bring everything together in summary and to bring closure to the session. They were asked if there was anything else anyone wanted to share about their experience of using the NZCYP. Once all the participants had shared, they were thanked and were given an explanation of what would happen next. The questions were open-ended as this allowed the participants to respond from their perspective (Hennink et al., 2011). A series of probe prompts were also available to help obtain more information from the questions (Swaminathan & Mulvihill, 2017).

The questions were piloted to help refine them before they were used with the focus groups (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was done by asking a colleague who was familiar with the NZCYP to look at the questions and to give feedback on whether these needed changing or if there were others that should be included.

An interview guide was also developed for the post-transition interviews (Appendices N, O). There were questions for the specialist teacher at the secondary school and for the parent of the student who had transitioned. These followed a similar format to the ones developed for the transition teams and

related to the research questions, but the focus was around the information gathered through the NZCYP and how this was perceived to have supported transition.

Focus group interviews. The main method for data collection was focus group interviews. A focus group brings together a predetermined group of people who have a shared experience which can be discussed interactively. They are used in a wide variety of settings and different research areas (Then, Rankin, & Ali, 2014). They are used to gather information about attitudes, perceptions, opinions and beliefs from individuals about a particular topic (Then et al., 2014).

There are several advantages to the use of focus groups. One advantage is that focus groups can generate a large amount of data in a very short period of time. Another reason is that they are interactive, and this can help to generate ideas as participants compare and contrast their experiences and perspectives. Further, focus groups give a flexibility so that if unanticipated data comes to light, it can be explored. Finally, they provide a relaxed and natural environment which can be fun allowing information to flow freely (Liamputtong, 2009).

According to Liamputtong (2009) there are also some difficulties with focus groups and potential limitations. The group dynamic can mean that there may be a high level of conformism or at the other extreme, polarisation. In this study, extreme positions were considered unlikely. The participants had a common interest in the transition of the student and had participated as a group

in the process of using the NZCYP for the first time. No one was an expert in the process as no one had used this toolkit before (Acocella, 2012).

Another potential limitation was the researcher's level of experience in facilitating a focus group. The researcher had not previously facilitated a focus group but had experience of leading groups in an education context. To feel more confident about this process, support and advice from others who had facilitated focus groups was sought and questions were practiced before the first group meeting. There was a balance required between controlling the conversation to stop the group drifting onto irrelevant topics, and allowing the opportunity for interesting information to present itself (Then et al., 2014). This was a difficult process to manage and something that required reflection after each session. Each focus group took 40 minutes. These sessions were audio-recorded using a Samsung Galaxy J1 cell phone.

The focus group for Group 1, consisted of the mother, SENCO and teacher aide and was conducted at the student's school. The focus group for Group 2 also consisted of three people including the mother and two classroom teachers and was held at the student's school.

The role of the researcher in a focus group is to serve as the moderator. The procedures followed in this study were modelled on those outlined in Then, Rankin & Ali (2014). After introductions, it was confirmed that all the participants had seen and read the Information Sheet and they were asked if they had any questions they wanted answered about the process. There was a discussion about the ground rules and confidentiality and what this meant for them as participants. It was explained that in a focus group it is important to talk with

each other about the questions asked and not to just take turns talking with the interviewer (Swaminathan & Mulvihill, 2017). The interview questions were then asked of the group. Clarification was sought if answers needed explanation. Answers were reflected to confirm that the responses had been understood correctly. Probes were used to develop and expand the discussion such as “Can you tell me more about that?” or “Can you give me an example?” (Swaminathan & Mulvihill, 2017). If any participant was not contributing, they were asked if they had anything else that they would like to add. At the end of the process, the discussion was summarised, the participants were informed what would happen next and then thanked for their participation. Immediately after the focus group interview, the researcher reflected on what had been said and made notes about anything that was distinctive about the process or the content of the discussion.

Individual interviews. Semi-structured individual interviews were used in addition to the focus groups. Initially individual interviews were only going to be used to gather post-transition data. However, due to two participants from Group 1 being unable to attend the focus group, individual interviews were conducted with both the classroom teacher and occupational therapist. These interviews followed the same questions and outline as the focus group.

The post-transition individual interviews were conducted with the specialist teacher at the new school and the student’s mother. These were to gather data to ascertain the usefulness of the NZCYP in the process of transition. They took 10 minutes to conduct. The mother had been involved from the inception of the study and gave information about the entire process. The specialist teacher was able to report on the value of the information that was

gathered using the NZCYP. This person had not been involved at the beginning of the project.

Data Analysis

The approach used to analyse the data was an inductive thematic analysis. This allows the researcher to discover “the frequent, dominant, or significant themes in the raw data without restraint imposed by structural methodologies” (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). Thomas (2006) states that the purposes for this approach are threefold: (1) to take raw data and to summarise it into a brief format; (2) to show the links between the research questions and the summarised findings in such a way that they are transparent and justifiable; and (3) to develop a model or theory about what has been discovered from the data. The process followed for thematic analysis is discussed in the following sections.

Phase one: Familiarisation with the data. After the focus group and individual interviews were completed, the audio was transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The researcher then became immersed in the data by reading and re-reading the text until thoroughly familiar with the content and able to gain an understanding of the emerging ideas that would be coded (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The reading was theory-driven as when reading the data, things relevant to the research questions were being noted. During the reading, however, the researcher endeavoured to approach the data with an open mind so that any interesting results were not lost due to preconceived ideas (Gibbs, 2007). Notes were made during this process and preliminary ideas for coding were developed.

Phase two: Generating initial codes. In the next phase, codes that were relevant to the research questions and the data were refined and finalised. The data was coded in segments that were of similar theme. Two columns were used along long side the data, one for a preliminary code and the second for the final code (Saldana, 2016). These codes were recorded in a code book (Appendix P). The code book contained the name of the code, a description of the code and examples from the text (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, & McCulloch, 2011). To help establish rigor and trustworthiness of the code book, supervisors and associate students were asked to check the clarity of the categories and their definitions (Thomas, 2006).

Phase three: Searching for themes. The coded data was further examined to identify the organising themes. Themes needed to relate to the coded extracts and to relate to the collective meanings of the overall data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase four: Reviewing potential themes. The themes were reviewed by considering whether the coded extracts and themes were related and showed coherency with each other and the research questions. This was done with each theme and if there was a code that was not meaningful, it was removed and placed under another theme if appropriate (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase five: Defining and naming themes. The next part of review and refining involved looking at the entire data set and considering whether it was valid for the different themes to be part of the data set. This allowed for the addition of any themes that had been neglected as well as modifying and even

removing themes that were initially considered. Once this was completed, there was a good understanding of the different themes, how they fitted together and the story that the themes were presenting (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The themes were then defined and named. Braun & Clarke (2006), refer to this as being able to capture the essence of each theme and determine what portion of the data each theme represents. Each theme was considered for how it related to the research questions and the overall picture.

Phase six: Producing the report. The results were produced considering the order of themes so there was logical connection and meaning to tell a coherent story about the data. Careful consideration was given to how this linked to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Place of the Researcher

Reflexivity is important in qualitative research as “who we are, our identities, contribute to our positions and the vantage points from which we view a research problem” (Trainor & Graue, 2014, p. 271). It is necessary for researchers to be reflexive in practice to identify values, how the environment impacts on how the researcher thinks and how this in turn influences research (Swaminathan & Mulvihill, 2017). Maintaining reflexivity helps to sharpen analysis and strengthen the credibility of research (Swaminathan & Mulvihill, 2017). Reflexive practice, means the personal connection with research becomes an advantage rather than a weakness (Frost & Kinmond, 2012). Frost and Kinmond (2012) suggest that early in the research process a reflexive standpoint is developed so that the researcher’s worldview is brought to the fore. This is also known as positionality and is both the worldview and the

position that a researcher has chosen to take within the research (Holmes, 2014).

In this study, the researcher is a SENCO and brings her experience and interest in transition both into and out of secondary school as a potential source of bias in the interpretation of interviews. The methods suggested by Frost & Kinmond (2012) were used to maintain rigor within research. The focus groups were aware of the position that the researcher held. A journal was kept in which the research process was reflected on (Mills, 2014). This included reflecting on the interviews and feelings about how they went and initial ideas about what had been shared. It was a tool to record the analytic process and was used to aid recall when writing results. The journal assisted the researcher to be reflexive throughout the entire process. Additionally, collaboration with colleagues also supported reflexivity and so the researcher did not engage in the research process in isolation. Fortnightly supervision meetings were held via Zoom with supervisors and fellow students who were working with the NZCYP. This enabled the researcher to share the process with others and to ask questions about the research process and be guided in decisions. Finally, the use of semi-structured interviews allowed for the participants to be able to report in their own words their perceptions of their experience with the NZCYP. The interview format allowed for a balance between researcher-led questions and participant-led comments (Hugh-Jones & Gibson, 2012)

Ethical Considerations

Key ethical considerations for this study were identified and analysed with the assistance of the researcher's supervisors. The study was determined to be low risk and a low-risk ethics notification was submitted to the Massey

University Human Ethics Committee (Appendix K). The key ethical considerations were those of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, respect for culture and special relationships.

Informed consent. This is the basic principle that all participants should be given adequate information about a research study so that they can make an informed choice as to whether they will participate or not (Sullivan & Riley, 2012). Principals of the schools were given a letter outlining the project and written consent was obtained before the project commenced (Appendices A, B). Informed consent for participants was gained for the collection and processing of data by the provision of a comprehensive Information Sheet and signing of the consent form (Appendices C, D, E, F). This Information Sheet was easy to understand and gave an overview of the requirements for the participants if they chose to be part of the study. The Information Sheet was also given to potential participants by the SENCOs of each school to avoid potential coercion by the researcher for them to become part of the study. Participation was voluntary, and members of the transition teams were informed that they could still be part of the team and attend the training but choose not to be part of the focus group. Before the focus groups commenced, it was verbally clarified with the participants that they had all received the Information Sheet. The project procedures were outlined again and then an opportunity was provided for any questions. For the purposes of this study, no child data was collected.

Confidentiality. It was explained in the Information Sheet and at the beginning of the focus group interview what would happen with the collected data. The participants were informed that the researcher would be transcribing the data personally, that it would be shared with supervisors in the transcribed

format, and that it would be published in the researcher's thesis and potentially in journal articles. They were also informed that any data collected would be stored in a password protected laptop and hard copies would be stored in a locked filing cabinet. This information would be destroyed five years from the completion of the study. Participants were asked not to share information from the focus group with others and to consider what was shared as confidential. Before the interviews, participants were informed that they could decline to answer any question and they could ask for the audio-recording device to be turned off at any time.

Anonymity. Closely related to confidentiality is that of anonymity. One way that confidentiality can be ensured is through the use of anonymity (Hennink et al., 2011). Hennink et al., state that it is important that the identity of the participants is only known to the researcher. This was done by having the participants unnamed in publications and identifying markers were given to participants in transcriptions. Any identifying information such as the names and locations of schools was removed. As the participants were working in groups, they were informed that confidentiality of identity would not be totally possible as they would be able to recognise each other in publications, but that their identities would be kept private from the general public.

Cultural issues. It is important to take into consideration cultural issues and to show respect for cultural groups when undertaking research (Hennink et al., 2011). The Te Ara Tika Guidelines for Māori research ethics (Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell, & Smith, n.d.) were read and considered, so that research was conducted in recognition of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty presents the principles of partnership, participation and

protection and these give a framework for identifying Māori ethical issues. The processes of how to consult and engage with Māori were considered in case any of the participants were to identify as Māori. The Pacific Research Principles (Pacific Research & Policy Centre, n.d.) were also read. The researcher had access to cultural advisors from the Institute of Education through Massey University if needed.

Special relationships. The researcher's role of SENCO and involvement in the transitioning of students may place the researcher in a position of power. For these reasons, any group in the study where the researcher had personally been involved with the student or family were not involved.

Summary

In this chapter, the rationale for the chosen methodological framework and the research procedures have been discussed. These procedures included how the semi-structured focus groups and individual interviews were conducted. A description of the thematic analysis and development of codebook was also presented. The place of the researcher has been disclosed and considerations around ethical issues and how these were managed have been discussed. The next chapter discusses the results and findings of this research.

Chapter four: Results

The aim of this study was to explore whether using the NZCYP assisted groups working with adolescents and young people to engage in successful information gathering, collaboration and planning and transition. This chapter presents the research findings from the thematic analyses of the transcripts. The organising themes are represented with excerpts from the interview transcripts.

Organising Themes and Codes

The transcripts from the focus groups were coded and reviewed and from this analysis five organising themes were determined. The themes and the associated codes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Organising Themes and Codes*

Organising themes	Codes
Information gathering	Depiction of the child
	Understanding
	Goals
Encouraging and developing collaboration	Working together
	Everyone's viewpoint
	Focussing
Involvement of parents	Expert parents
	Parents are valuable
Road bumps along the way	Finding form difficult
	Helpfulness
Seeing the potential	Information sharing
	Starting point
	Usefulness
	Solutions to difficulties

The organising themes highlight the different areas in which using the NZCYP was perceived to enhance practice for the groups either currently or in the future or how it might have been helpful in the past. The themes also highlight areas where there were some difficulties.

Information Gathering

The perceptions of the groups about information gathering are presented in the following sections around depiction of the child, understanding and goals.

Depiction of the child. A strength that was identified about the NZCYP was that it gathered thorough background information which not every team member had previously been aware of. As one participant stated “...*there was a lot more background information that got filled in, you know right from back when she was a baby*” (SENCO, Group 1).

There was more than just background information elicited and the groups identified that this gave a holistic view of the student. The NZCYP collected information about a wide variety of categories such as the interests of the student. The NZCYP had the capacity to include the idiosyncrasies that made the student the unique individual that they are.

Well I think it gave an overall picture, and specially, just the wee quirky things and the things that she struggles with, you know everything in an overall picture was included, wasn't just focussing on one thing – Parent, Group 1.

...it created a really good picture of the student from day 1 to now – Classroom teacher, Group 1.

...you're looking at the student, and their background, them as a person, their interests, their likes and dislikes - Classroom teacher 1, Group 2.

it just gives you a more holistic picture of what's going on” – Classroom teacher 1, Group 2.

Another feature of the information gathered was that it gave an indication of the strengths and needs of the students.

And it was good in order to see her strengths and the things that she needs to work on and that was quite similar at home and school – Classroom teacher, Group 1.

...that sort of gave you really broad pictures of areas where he was experiencing difficulty, but it also gave you an idea of where all his strengths were – Classroom teacher 1, Group 2.

The information gathered was from the different environments that the student spent time in including school, home and community. This gave a portrayal of the student that was bigger than just the school environment. It enabled groups to see a comparison of the student in the different settings they occupied.

It was interesting to see how she's similar at home to what she is at school, and the differences as well – SENCO, Group 1.

...a summary you could give of her interests and things that she does in the community – SENCO, Group 1.

...and it's not just in one environment, it's, it's you know, it's the school environment as well as the home environment – Classroom teacher 1, Group 2.

...it opens your eyes to the fact that he does different things at school than he does at home, because they are two very different environments – Classroom teacher 1, Group 2.

Understanding. With more detailed information and increased knowledge about the student, came increased understanding about why a student might or might not do things in a certain way.

...it made us think about some of the things and the way she acts, and maybe made us think about why she does a particular thing – Parent, Group 1.

...and a few of her behavioural characteristics made sense because I had that background information now – Classroom teacher, Group 1.

It revealed to me, how I need a lot more information about the boy that I am working with and with this information, I get to recognise the little triggers, what he can and can't do. Recognise, pre-empting almost where he's at – Classroom teacher 2, Group 2.

One group member summarised this idea by simply saying, “...there were a couple of lightbulb moments” (Occupational therapist, Group 1).

All the information that was gathered was given to the secondary school for the student who transitioned from Group 1. This information gave the school background information and an understanding of the student.

I learnt a bit about the student's communication, and how she prefers to let other people speak for her, so I knew that was an area that we needed to focus on – New specialist teacher, Group 1.

It gave me information about her which is good because she doesn't want to talk – New specialist teacher, Group 1.

...school camp was coming up and so that was handy to know that if she refused some food it's just because she has those issues – New specialist teacher, Group 1.

Goals. As the groups gathered and collated information from the past and the present, and gained more understanding about the student, they were able to consolidate goals that they already had for the student and use that information to project future dreams and goals.

...it's a summary all about her, what she's doing now and what we see as her goals – SENCO, Group 1.

I found out information about her past that I didn't know and, and yeah, really good for planning for the future – Classroom teacher, Group 1.

I think this gives you an idea of some of the experiences that the student has had which might influence where he might go – Classroom teacher 1, Group 2.

The goals from Group 1, for the transitioning student were given to the new secondary school. These were recognised and were being implemented

into the student's programme. The teacher that was interviewed said, "...one of her goals is about communication" (New specialist teacher, Group 1).

This information was being used to inform the current and future programme for the student.

We're focussing on the skills that will be important for her when she leaves school and the biggest one is that she can communicate to others
– New specialist teacher, Group 1.

Summary. In this section, the information gathered enabled the groups to be able to have a clearer depiction of the child. As they gained more in-depth background information which was holistic, showing strengths and needs, and in different settings, the groups gained a better understanding of the student. This allowed them to be able to set current goals and imagine potential goals in the future. The understanding and goals around the child transitioning to secondary school were transferred to the new school setting.

Encouraging and developing collaboration

The perceptions of the groups regarding encouraging and developing collaboration are presented in the following sections around working together, everyone's viewpoint and focussing.

Working together. Both groups expressed the need to work together and help each other in the process. They needed to help each other with understanding the NZCYP as it was the first time the groups had used it and they supported each other through the sections that they found particularly difficult.

So, everyone did have the same problem so when we were talking about it we did go, "what was that about?" ... so, you sort of did have to work together as a group to work out what they meant – SENCO, Group 1.

...we actually collaborated on that as I wasn't quite sure if I was filling it in correctly – Classroom teacher, Group 2.

As the groups worked together, they not only helped each other, but they learnt new things from each other about the student that they had not known previously.

...we were sharing some thoughts and ideas and maybe digging a bit deeper on a few things which came out which was quite nice – Occupational therapist, Group 1.

...we're all learning off each other, yeah, we've all got things to offer and it's about the student in the middle, which is great. So yeah, I find it really collaborative, which is cool – Classroom teacher 2, Group 2.

Everyone's viewpoint. The importance of having everyone's perspective was important for both groups. They felt that the NZCYP provided a vehicle by which all voices were necessary and required for the process to happen effectively.

...when we came to collaborate, everyone had something different to bring to it and that we hadn't thought about before – SENCO, Group 1.

I suppose having that big group approach, brought out different things, so, I think that was probably the strength of it – Occupational therapist, Group 1.

I guess we all worked together independently, then came together, so there was both aspects to it and I think that's a good thing to kind of get everyone's viewpoint – Classroom teacher, Group 1.

...I see it as being something that brings you together because you do actually have to put away, you do actually have to bring something to the table when you're doing something like this – Classroom teacher 1, Group 2.

And we're all giving our input into it, so for me I find it quite collaborative like that – Classroom teacher 2, Group 2.

Also, even though there were different perspectives, the groups worked together to gain a consensus about the student that they were focussing on.

Some of the things I wrote down initially, I sort of changed that all when I came to the summary because people had got a different view and came out slightly different – SENCO, Group 1.

So, I think it was good for us all to have our own say and then kind of come together with the similarities – Classroom teacher, Group 1.

Focussing. Both groups identified that the NZCYP was able to keep them on task as they collaborated. It gave them a structure and a focus that was sometimes not available when using other formats.

Right, I tend to go off on tangents, this does keep you focussed – Parent, Group 1.

...it focussed our attention as we were going along, so yeah, you know when you have an IEP or, you can go in all directions and sort of coming to have to fill in the form, made you have to fill it in – SENCO, Group 1.

...there was good targeted questions or formulas to keep you guided – Parent, Group 2.

...we're definitely all on the same page as this (taps NZCYP) sits in the middle with us with the student – Classroom teacher 2, Group 2.

Summary. In summary, the NZCYP enabled the participants to be able to work together. As they worked together, they were able to help and learn from each other. The groups were also able to hear all points of view of the various participants. The specific structure of the toolkit enabled groups to keep on task and focussed during the process. These are aspects that are both evidence of and ways to develop and encourage collaboration.

Involvement of parents

The perceptions of the groups about the involvement of parents are presented in the following sections around expert parents and parents are valuable.

Expert parents. The parents had information about their child that no one else in the group had and so they became the experts. The parents had not anticipated that their information would be valuable as they were so familiar with the details about their children.

...because that's history for me, you know I already know that – Parent, Group 1.

...because I noticed when I was here on that Friday and some of the things I was saying, and I noticed both teachers going, "Wow!" and they were just nothing things to me...because it's been my life for 20 years – Parent, Group 2.

Mum had information which was going back to when he was at pre-school...and I had no idea about it – Classroom teacher 1, Group 2.

Parents are valuable. The parents' voices were appreciated and encouraged in the process and the groups recognised the value of having their input and feedback on what was happening for the student.

...and to hear different perspectives, so from Mum and Dad's perspective, my perspective etc, that was really good – Classroom teacher, Group 1.

Whereas, this has been my life for about 6 months. So, I see mum as being a really valuable resource – Classroom teacher, Group 2.

...nice to know that Mum and Dad were on the same page with us in terms of communication and taking part in activities and that – Classroom teacher, Group 1.

Summary. The parents were viewed as experts as they had information and knowledge that no one else had in the groups. They were surprised by this. The parents' voices and opinions were both encouraged and valued.

Road bumps along the way

The perceptions of the groups about road bumps along the way are presented in the following sections around finding the form difficult and helpfulness.

Finding form difficult. Both groups experienced difficulties with interpreting aspects of the form.

My husband and I looked at each other and thought – “What does this mean?” – Parent, Group 1.

It seemed to me like most people were having the same problems like interpreting the form and trying to work out what they were asking – SENCO, Group 1.

It was a little bit hard to understand what and how to answer it – Classroom teacher 1, Group 2.

The groups were unanimous over which section caused them the most angst.

...it was the Functional Ability Profile- SENCO, Group 1.

...it was quite a tricky part to fill in – the Functional Ability Profile – Classroom teacher 1, Group 2.

The difficulties with using the form impacted on family members when filling out the NZCYP. One parent reflected this by saying, “*Well, for a person who’s not involved in all the acronyms and that I found it quite difficult*” (Parent 1, Group 1). Another member of this group reflected this by saying, “*I think from Mum and Dad’s point of view it was a little bit complex*” (Occupational therapist, Group 1).

The group members were uncertain about some parts of the form and struggled with it. Group 2 identified that this difficulty and the time taken in the process might limit the number of parents who were prepared to participate in the process. One of the teachers said, *“I guess that’s a down-side as I’m not sure every parent is going to want to commit to doing this toolkit”* (Classroom teacher 1, Group 2).

Helpfulness. With respect to the actual transition for Group 1, the perspective of the parent was that she was uncertain whether the NZCYP had been used by the transition school. The parent was very happy with how the transition had gone but was unsure if the NZCYP had contributed to this. She said, *“I’m not too sure, to be honest whether it was helpful or not in that sense. I’m undecided”* (Parent, Group 1). The parent was unsure whether the NZCYP had been used due to the first IEP at the new school where she felt that *“we were sort of missing a lot of information”* (Parent, Group 1). She also wondered whether the new goals created were referenced to the old goals.

I think new goals have been set and we’re going to work on those and they probably weren’t referenced to the old goals, but we certainly keep creating and building on them – Parent, Group 1.

Summary. The groups found aspects of the form difficult and the Functional Ability Profile caused the most difficulty. Group 1 wondered how this made parents feel and Group 2 wondered if this would be a barrier to participation. The parent of the student who transitioned was uncertain as to whether it had helped transition and whether the previous goals were being carried through to the new secondary school.

Seeing the potential

The perceptions of the groups about seeing the potential is presented in the following sections around information sharing, starting point, usefulness and solutions to difficulties.

Information sharing. The group members recognised that there was information that was new for some group members and that was historic to others. The groups identified that information about a student was often lost over time. It made group members reflect on how easy it was to forget that people new to the group did not know previous information as these details had become common knowledge to themselves. They also identified that information can be lost in the transition from one school to the next.

So you forget what you know and you know, I read a lot before the student comes in and I've sort of got a picture in my mind and you don't necessarily hand that over...you kind of forget that other people don't know what you know – SENCO, Group 1.

And that's what his teacher said, you know, "where's this information? Why has none of this information come forward from the previous school?" And it hasn't been... – Parent, Group 2.

They saw it as being able to share information in a concise and precise way to inform the future settings that they were transitioning to. They hoped that this would make things easier for the next setting and that information would not be lost as they themselves had experienced.

So, that will be hopefully easier for the school she's going to cause they can start from there and they'll have lots of background information – SENCO, Group 1.

We want to share relevant information going out, because high school always seems like such a big step – SENCO, Group 1.

Getting down what matters is going to help people moving forward – Classroom teacher 2, Group 2.

Starting point. Both teams saw the NZCYP as a starting point in the transition journey of their student. For Group 1, their student was transitioning to secondary school. This group saw the NZCYP as useful for the new school to use in preparation before the student arrived and as a reference after she had started school.

So actually knowing how she communicates before she gets to her new school so that you have got some tools in place or some strategies in place to understand that rather than her just turning up on day one and just learning everything from scratch we can kind of get you a heads up – Classroom teacher, Group 1.

I think it really is a good information gatherer to share that with the new team will be really valuable then they can be prepared when she arrives and as I said before you've got something to go back to if things aren't working – Specialist support, Group 1.

The information that had been passed on to the new school had been distributed to the wider school, so that all staff knew about the student and some details about her before she arrived at school.

...information was passed onto the other people in the Support Centre, SENCO, the teacher aides, and the teachers via a memo – New specialist teacher, Group 1.

Group 2 saw the NZCYP as a starting point in a much bigger process of developing a transition programme for their students who were transitioning out of secondary school.

This really is the starting point and from there we channel everything towards those last couple of years...and this will help give other providers a full, accurate, detailed picture – Classroom teacher 2, Group 2.

...for us, the whole profile of a student from 14 to 21 plus is exactly what we are trying to do in this space, so for me, this is just a great starting point – Classroom teacher 2, Group 2.

Usefulness. Both groups could see the value of the NZCYP and expressed this in the fact that they were keen to use the NZCYP again with current and future students.

I think it's a really great idea, it's quite exciting that something like this could happen for kids – Teacher Aide, Group 1.

I'm currently trying to persuade one of our contributing primary schools to do this task for one of their students – SENCO, Group 1.

I think with some teams that there would be really good buy in and especially with some more complex kids, it would be quite valuable – Occupational therapist, Group 1.

I thought it was an excellent thing to do and I would recommend doing it for each of the kids that I have to work with – Classroom teacher 2, Group 2.

Solutions to difficulties. Both groups were keen to add suggestions to improve the form, to assist in making it more accessible and useful for potential users in the future. These suggestions included ways to make it available in digital form to create a living document, and additions such as photos, videos, transport information and work experience.

Let's put it in digital form, send it off, keep it, add to it and if that could happen it would just keep going, an up to date document – SENCO, Group 1.

It would be nice to see a video, to send a video of her doing her normal things in class – SENCO, Group 1.

Including practical things like transport to school because they can be an issue as well – Specialist support, Group 1.

You'll need some sort of record of what sort of work experience he's done – Classroom teacher 1, Group 2.

Summary. The groups saw that the NZCYP was able to gather new information and stop old information from becoming lost. They also saw it as being a concise and precise way of sharing information about the student with others. The groups reflected that it was useful and wanted to use it again. Finally, the groups had solutions to difficulties and suggestions about how to improve the NZCYP.

Summary

This chapter has detailed and described the five main themes that have emerged through the thematic analysis of the qualitative data in response to the research objective to see if the NZCYP can contribute towards successful information gathering, collaboration and planning, and transition of a student with CN transitioning either into or out of secondary school. The themes show that overall the participants were very enthusiastic about the NZCYP and its capacity to fulfil these aims. The next chapter will discuss these findings in terms of the literature, trustworthiness and limitations of the study, implications for practice and directions for future research, ending with a conclusion.

Chapter five: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of two groups of participants using the NZCYP as they transitioned a student with CN either into or out of secondary school. Training was given to participants around the use of the NZCYP. Information was gathered through semi-structured interviews with focus groups and individual interviews after the participants had used the NZCYP, and then after the student had transitioned. The following chapter presents a discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions. These findings will be presented considering current literature and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979, 1994). There will be a discussion around the trustworthiness and limitations of the study, implications from this study for practice and future research, and a conclusion will be presented.

Research Question One: Contribution to Information Gathering

Research question one was: In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful information gathering for adolescents and young adults with CN transitioning into or out of a secondary school?

Previous studies have identified the importance of gathering information about students with CN who are transitioning that is: 1) individualised and strengths-based (Hatfield et al., 2018) and, 2) well documented and organised (Strnadová & Cumming, 2014). There is only one research study from Aotearoa/New Zealand that has explored perceptions around the NZCYP toolkit and its contribution to information gathering (McLaughlin et al., 2017). That study did not focus on students with CN within the specific context of transitioning either into or out of secondary school.

The perceptions of the participants about the ability of the NZCYP to contribute towards information gathering was generally very favourable. They thought that there was detailed background information about the student from the past and current situation. This aspect of requiring detailed information about students to support transition, is one that was reported by Ng et al. (2016). In this study by Ng et al. (2016), schools commented on the variability in the quality and depth of information provided by the sending school. The NZCYP provides a standardised way to gather information so that there is consistency between settings.

For several of the participants in both groups, the information gathered was new to them. They talked about how information can be lost over time and how when you have information about a student, you forget that others may not know what you know. They could see that having all this information in one place, so that it would not be lost for future reference, was invaluable. The concept of the NZCYP helping to discover lost and new information is in keeping with the previous research about the NZCYP (McLaughlin et al., 2017). The participants of this study saw this aspect as important for the next school and had hopes that the information that they had collected would not be lost at the next setting and that this would make things easier for transition.

The information gathered was able to include the interests and characteristics of the student. This enabled the development of a profile that was unique to them. The participants thought the NZCYP allowed for individualised information which is essential to transition planning as no two students with CN are alike. This individualised information can help with providing the specific support and attention that each student requires (Bell,

Devecchi, Mc Guckin, & Shevlin, 2017). It can also assist with specifically tailoring solutions to the individual needs that students may require to transition successfully (Gauthier-Boudreault et al., 2017). Individualised information and planning is important as with these details, individualised programmes can be designed and implemented to meet the needs of the students (Cobb & Alwell, 2009).

The profile was able to portray the student in terms of strengths and not just need. This ability to be able see a student in terms of strengths and not deficits, is also important for successful transition planning (Carter et al., 2014; Gauthier-Boudreault et al., 2017).

The participants commented on how the profile gathered information from the different settings that the student was in, such as school, home and community. They thought this gave a picture of the student that was bigger than just school and meant that they could see differences and similarities of the student in the variety of settings. Overall, they considered the information gathered gave a holistic picture of the student and their functioning in their everyday living and situations. This is consistent with the findings from the previous research using the NZCYP. Participants found the NZCYP to be useful in gathering and collating information about a student's functioning and participation within a variety of different contexts and situations (McLaughlin et al., 2017). This is also consistent with the ICF-CY on which the NZCYP has been based and developed. The ICF-CY has been found to give a portrayal of the child that is holistic and complete (Nguyen et al., 2018; Silveira-Maia et al., 2017).

For transition to be successful, information gathered about the student needs to be holistic, gathered from a variety of sources and have sufficient depth to give enough detail about the student (Carter et al., 2014; Ng et al., 2016; White & Rae, 2016). If this is achieved, then there will be a better understanding about the student. The perceptions of the participants indicated that, as they gathered the information and collated it, they gained a better understanding and fresh insights about the student that they did not previously have. This is consistent with the findings of the previous study using the NZCYP and its ability to give a new perspective about a student (McLaughlin et al., 2017).

The participants did have some problems with using the NZCYP as they gathered information. There was one section of the toolkit that all participants struggled with when filling it in. This was the Functional Ability Profile. The interesting point was that even though it caused confusion and difficulty, it was the section that was able to identify the strengths and needs about the student.

Difficulties with the form led to two issues with the toolkit for participants. One was whether all families would want to be involved with the process. This was because of the complexity of the language of the form and the amount of time required for the process. This could become a barrier to families being involved and as all stakeholders are necessary to successfully transition a student, this would be a disadvantage. There are often barriers to parents being involved with the transition planning for their children and work needs to be done to identify and reduce them (Hirano et al., 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2017; Strnadová & Cumming, 2014). Parents also commented on the terminology in the form. They did not understand some of the terminology that was used. This

had left them confused and wondering what was required when filling in the form. Zeitlin and Curcic (2014) also identified that using less jargon was more inclusive for parents accessing meetings in educational contexts. Concerns around parental involvement with the process, and the terminology used were also issues that were identified in the previous study using the NZCYP (McLaughlin et al., 2017).

In relation to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979, 1994), the NZCYP demonstrates that the child is kept central to the process when gathering information. It shows how the NZCYP can facilitate the different microsystems around the child coming together in the mesosystem so they can contribute their knowledge about the child in preparation for transition. The knowledge of the group can either improve or hinder transition for the student with CN. The better, more extensive and in depth the knowledge, the better the potential transition (Carter et al., 2014; Ng et al., 2016). The ability to gather a wide range of information in the form of knowledge about ability, interests, strengths and needs is an ecological strength of the NZCYP. As well, this research has demonstrated that information can be lost over time and this is particularly so at transition points. When considering Bronfenbrenner, and the chronosystem, transitions are changes that happen over time for a student with CN and these impact on their growth and development. Losing information can negatively impact on the successful transition of a student with CN (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016).

Research Question Two: Contribution to Collaboration and Planning

Research question two was: In what ways was the NZCYP perceived as contributing to collaboration and planning for adolescents and young adults with CN transitioning into or out of a secondary school?

Previous studies have identified that successful transition is dependent on: 1) effective communication and collaboration (Plotner et al., 2018), and 2) effective planning (Ravenscroft et al., 2017). These factors happen with increasing effectiveness as all stakeholders are involved and considered as equals (van Rens, Haelermans, Groot, & Maassen van den Brink, 2018).

The perceptions of the participants about the ability of the NZCYP to contribute to collaboration and planning were gathered. There were several instances that demonstrated that collaboration was occurring whilst the groups were using the NZCYP. Firstly, there was the fact that all stakeholders involved with the transition of the students were present when they were collating the information. Van Rens et al. (2017), found that it was important for all stakeholders to be involved for positive transitions of students with CN.

The parents of the students in transition are one set of stakeholders. Including parents as collaborative partners is viewed as highly important for the process of transition (Rodriguez et al., 2017; Strnadová & Cumming, 2014). The perspective of both groups was that parents were included, valued and an encouraged voice within the process. As a result, parents became experts within the group. This was related to the information that they had to share that no one else knew. It is important to gain the expertise that parents have about their children to support successful transition (Reupert et al., 2015). Billington et

al. (2000), recognised that parents are the best resource that their child has, as they know them the best. They understand what works for their child and what supports are necessary and helpful.

The parents' perspective of their knowledge being important was a surprise for them as what they shared was every day for them and they had not recognised its value to others. With the groups acknowledging this, capacity was increased for the parents. With increased capacity comes the potential for effective transitions (Stewart, 2009). In this study, parents were acknowledged as equals and were actively included in the collaborative process. This acknowledgment of being equal with professionals within the group is one way to break down barriers to parental involvement in collaboration (Kochhar-Byrant & Heishman, 2010; White & Rae, 2016; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014). They were also empowered which is another way that barriers to parental involvement can be broken down and collaboration improved (Strnadová & Cumming, 2014).

Other collaborative processes that the participants reported when using the NZCYP was that they needed to work together and help each other with the process. During this process they identified that they were learning from each other about how to use the toolkit, new details about the student, and coming up with new ideas about how to improve the NZCYP. Kennedy and Stewart (2011), identified that the ability to help each other and learn from one another is a feature of good collaboration.

Sharing information is another indication of good collaboration (Kennedy & Stewart, 2011). Throughout the process all participants were required to share, and their information was appreciated. There were times when there

were different perspectives about the student, but the teams worked together to gain consensus and make joint decisions (Kochhar-Byrant & Heishman, 2010). Carter et al. (2014) acknowledges the importance of having all perspectives to get a complete picture of the student. Collaborative practice is acknowledged as the best way in which to assist a student with CN to transition to a new setting (Fontil et al., 2019).

Tools have been acknowledged to have the ability to increase collaboration (Budd, 2016). These tools may be low-tech in nature such as white boards, paper and charts. There is also a raft of tools available online to support groups of people to collaborate. These online tools such as Google Docs enable collaboration without the need for meeting in person. The NZCYP is a paper tool which has been designed with the purpose of supporting collaboration (McLaughlin et al., 2017). The participants acknowledged that using the structure of the NZCYP had the advantage of keeping them focussed and on task and assisted in the collaborative process. In previous research, the NZCYP was not necessarily used in a collaborative manner and so it was encouraging to see this occurring with both groups in this study (McLaughlin et al., 2017). This was most likely because part of the training procedure instructed the groups in how to use the NZCYP. This process involved participants taking the form away and filling it in independently, and then returning to fill in the toolkit together later. In the first study, it was left to the discretion of the groups as to how they would use the toolkit (McLaughlin et al., 2017). Filling the form in independently, and agreeing to return to complete the form together, led to a commitment to the process. The parent from Group 2, identified that some families might not want to commit to such a process.

The participants also talked about using the NZCYP for planning. The ability to plan is also indicative of collaboration (Kennedy & Stewart, 2011). As participants gained a better understanding of the student, they were able to set goals with the information that they had obtained. For Group 1, they used the toolkit to plan the goals that they felt were important for the student to continue with at secondary school. Group 2 did not use the NZCYP for planning but were confident that this process would lead to the student achieving his goals as he moved closer to transition. The groups reflected that gathering information from past and present enabled them to be able to consolidate current goals and to be able to think about what might be possible for the future.

Planning has been identified as important in transition and that this enables a vision for the transition and goals to be set (Ravenscroft et al., 2017). It should enable the group to focus on goals that incorporate dreams, hopes abilities and gifts (Michaels & Ferrara, 2009). Transition needs to provide goals for the child and goals around the actual process of transition (Hatfield et al., 2018). When using the NZCYP for planning, the groups used it for goals that were to be taken to the next setting or used to develop potential goals. They did not use it as a tool to plan the actual transition process, which is a large part of successful transition and is not the intended purpose of the toolkit. When the groups used the NZCYP they developed a picture of the student at that point in time. It did not make them think about planning the actual steps in transition. It was not determined why this happened, but it is possible that the time that it took to work through the NZCYP meant that teams were not able to plan the transition. It was simply too much to expect teams to be able to complete the NZCYP and plan for transition in one session. Once the groups had completed

the NZCYP, another meeting specifically for the purpose of planning the transition may have helped with this. In previous research with the NZCYP, like collaboration, they found that they participants did not necessarily use the toolkit for its intended purposes of planning (McLaughlin et al., 2017). This study has demonstrated mixed results with planning but demonstrates the potential for this to happen.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979, 1994), when used to describe transitions refers to the importance of the of the microsystems around the child coming together in the mesosystem to interact and plan for transition. The strength of the interactions and actions of those within the mesosystem with regard to transition planning, will positively or negatively impact on the transition of the student. The NZCYP has demonstrated in this study, that collaboration, which is an important aspect of transition planning, has been enabled with its use. It has allowed for positive collaboration to happen between the various stakeholders involved in the transition of the student with CN (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016).

Research Question Three: Contribution to Transition

Research question three was: In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful transition for adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of a secondary school?

Research has shown that if transition is not successful, then outcomes for students are often unfavourable leading to educational, social and emotional outcomes that will be negative (Meadows, Davies, & Beamish, 2014; Shogren & Plotner, 2012; van Rens et al., 2018). There was only one student who

transitioned during the timeframe of this research and this was into a secondary school. The perception of the parent of the child who had transitioned to secondary school was that the transition had gone very well. However, she was unsure about whether the NZCYP had contributed to this successful transition or not. This was due to the first IEP, where she felt that there was information missing and that new goals were being set that did not appear to be referenced to the old goals. However, when interviewing the specialist teacher at the secondary school, she identified the goals that had been set by the transition group from the toolkit. She also referred to them being used to inform the student's current programme and recognised their importance for the future and especially when the student left school. The specialist teacher also felt that she had gained some understanding and important information about the student. The specialist teacher reported that she had used the information from the NZCYP to make a summary of the student in the form of a memo, and this had been distributed to the wider school. This allowed for the numerous staff that would be teaching the student, to have an indication of some of the strengths and needs of the student. In this way the teachers would have had an overview of the student when she arrived in their classes. This is in line with recommended practices found by Nuske et al. (2019).

There were also difficulties with how the information was given to the receiving school. The specialist teacher received all the individual forms, and this led to some confusion as initially she wondered why she was repetitively reading similar information. It would appear that the SENCO of the secondary school received the information from the previous school's SENCO in a meeting. The specialist teacher who took responsibility for the student once she

was a secondary school was not at this meeting. Therefore, she did not have this link with the previous school and details of the NZCYP explained to her in person. This problem with transfer of information between settings has been identified as an issue for students with CN and smooth transition (Ng et al., 2016; Strnadová & Cumming, 2014)

Did the NZCYP contribute to the successful transition of the student or not? From the perspective of the parent, there was uncertainty. Taken from the perspective of the school, it could be viewed that the NZCYP did contribute to a successful transition for the student with CN. The missing component in this research is what happened between the old and new school in the way of collaboration and transition practice and the handing on of information that was contained within the NZCYP. Collaboration and co-ordination between old and new settings has been identified as an essential part of successful transition (Hopwood et al., 2016). One thing the NZCYP did ensure though, was that information was gathered and transferred to the new school and so was not lost in the transition. The NZCYP, therefore, can be identified as a tool that can be used to collate information and may even be able to be a record that follows a student throughout their schooling. This concept has been identified as important in previous studies (Richter et al., 2019).

The fact that there was uncertainty from the parent of Group 1, about the contribution of the NZCYP and the successful transition should not be surprising. Both teams identified that using the NZCYP was a good starting point for the process of transition. Group 1 identified that it was an initial point of reference for the new school to be able to use in preparation for the arrival of the student and in the initial days of getting to know her. Indeed, this is how the

NZCYP had been used within the context of the new school. Maybe, the issue can be viewed through the fact that it was not only the student who had transitioned but the parents as well and that there needed to be new relationships and collaborative partnerships built between home and school. Part of the process of collaboration is the formation and development of relationships. (Kochhar-Byrant & Heishman, 2010). New relationships take time to develop and they are key for all stakeholders to be able to collaborate and work together to plan for the student in the new setting (Gershwin-Mueller & Buckley, 2014).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979, 1994) would support this view of changing microsystems requiring time (chronosystem) to develop new relationships in the interactions of the mesosystem (Strnadová & Cumming, 2016).

Trustworthiness of the Study

This research used valid and sound data collection and analysis measures, and these helped to ensure the trustworthiness or validity of the study. Specific measures employed will now be discussed.

Inductive analysis. Using an inductive analysis of the results helped the researcher to utilise a bottom-up approach. In doing so, this allowed a way to look for the story the data was trying to share rather than searching for the story that the researcher wanted to tell. This allowed for unexpected results to be discovered. An example of an unexpected result was the concept of the parent as an expert. This was an outcome that was common to both groups. The themes and codes were generated from the data of the focus groups.

Reflexivity. The researcher was reflexive during the research process. The focus groups were aware of the occupation of the researcher. The positionality of the researcher has been declared in this thesis. The researcher also kept a journal of findings and impressions during the research and analysis process. There were also regular meetings via Zoom with the researcher's supervisors and fellow students who were involved in similar projects. This helped to monitor and audit biases as the study progressed.

Transferability. Transferability refers to the idea that the findings from the research are context dependent (Mills, 2014). Rather than generalising findings to the wider population, they are the experiences of the participants using the NZCYP at that particular time and place. This is common when using a phenomenological approach. Some of the context for the study has been given so that this can be considered by readers.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the strengths of the research design there are limitations that need to be considered. These limitations may impact on the findings and interpretation by the reader.

Number of participants. There were only two focus groups and a total of nine people who participated in the interview process. This was despite wanting to recruit more participants. There was an unavailability of students in transition during this particular time frame. Also, of those that were in transition, there were only two groups willing to participate.

Self-selection bias. There was also a potential bias as the groups were selected on their willingness to participate in the research and with principals

that were willing for this to happen in their schools. There was potential that the groups involved were already highly proactive and functioning in a collaborative manner as they headed towards transition. Therefore, transition was going to be successful regardless of whether they used the toolkit or not.

Student voice. There was no student voice included in this study. Student voice about their needs and goals for the future transition is an important factor for success. Student voice was not included in this study because of the more complex procedure that would have been required around ethical considerations.

Time frame. The timeframe used and timing of research was also a limitation as they meant that results were unable to be obtained for the student in the process of leaving secondary school. There were also complications that arose due to the availability of students in transition out of secondary school and the time that it took to be ready to seek students in transition. These all compounded to create a situation of being unable to track the student in transition in the timeframe available.

Implications for Practice

The perceptions of two groups using the NZCYP for students in transition into or out of secondary school have been gathered and have added to the body of research around transition and the NZCYP. The results from this research have presented a number of implications for practice. A strength of the NZCYP is to gather information about the student from a variety of sources. In order to support the gathering of information, collaboration and transition the following factors for practice should be taken into consideration.

Involvement of stakeholders. The key to the success of using the NZCYP is the involvement of all stakeholders. Previous research has shown that there are often barriers to the involvement of parents in the process of planning for transition (Hirano et al., 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2017; Strnadová & Cumming, 2014). Ensuring that parents feel included and involved in the process of using the NZCYP is essential to its success. Training around the use of the NZCYP assisted with the involvement of parents. Safeguarding parents so that they focus on the sections that can demonstrate their expertise is also essential. They are the ones that have the best understanding about such things as historic information, community and home involvement. This will help parents to be seen as experts and empowered during the process, rather than focussing on the difficulties with some of the more technical aspects of the form.

Facilitators. There is a need for facilitation of the process by someone who is experienced in using the NZCYP. Participants in the groups recognised that using the NZCYP another time would be easier as they would be more familiar with the form and the process. Skilled facilitation will assist with the gathering of information, collaboration, and planning. It will also support the involvement and inclusion of all stakeholders. This may assist parents to feel comfortable with the process if they are feeling uncomfortable with some of the process.

Building new relationships. An important aspect to consider for practice, is that new relationships need to be forged between the old and the new settings that the student is transitioning to. New relationships need to be established so that trust can be built between the old and the new. The old involves the family and the student and they are the constant factor in any

transition. If these new relationships are starting to be established before transition, the way in which the information from the NZCYP is passed on will be strengthened. The way in which this information is passed from one setting to the next will either potentially support or hinder the transition of the student.

Implications for Future Research

This study explored the perceptions of parents, schools and professionals around whether the NZCYP contributed to successful gathering of information, collaboration and planning, and transition for students with CN who were either entering or leaving secondary school.

Parental involvement. Overall, the NZCYP was perceived to be very useful and participants were very enthusiastic about its potential as a tool to use with students with CN. It was perceived as useful in its ability to collate information about the student that was both individualised and strengths based without negating the ability to identify needs of the student. The overall depiction of the child was holistic and comprehensive. The NZCYP was able to gather information from the different contexts of the student's life. There were also the multiple perspectives of the different stakeholders. The issue that arose from this research was whether all parents would want to be involved in this process and whether the jargon of the toolkit would alienate some parents in the process. Future research will be important in identifying ways in which parents can feel empowered and included in the process of using the NZCYP despite the necessity of some educational terminology.

Planning. The NZCYP was used in a collaborative fashion and it appears that this was enabled by instructing groups specifically about the

requirement to fill in the NZCYP as a group. This was in order to make the most of the collaborative process and the information that it would yield. However, there needs to be more research around how to support groups to use the toolkit with planning. This would most likely be in the form of training and ongoing support to be able to mentor and help teams use the NZCYP to plan and develop goals for the student in the different settings that they find themselves.

Changes to the NZCYP. There was one section that caused both groups problems with how to interpret this and this was the Functional Ability Profile. Future reviews of this section on the NZCYP should be considered to give better access to all stakeholders who use it. There were also some good suggestions that came from groups about the use of the NZCYP. Research around using the NZCYP as a collaborative tool in an online context where stakeholders could add and take away information would be useful. This would create a living document that was not limited to updates at a formal IEP meeting. In this way the NZCYP could become part of a collection of documentation around a student on an online platform about that student.

Transition. To date this is the first study that has specifically looked at the NZCYP as a tool for transition. The results show promise for the use of the toolkit as a support in transition. This research only examined how the toolkit was used with the current team who was preparing for the student to transition. There is a requirement to examine the process of how the NZCYP is used in the actual process of transition from one setting to the next. A way in which this could happen, would be to include staff from the next context with the team as they collate the information and collaborate when using the NZCYP. In this way

the new context would experience the process, begin to develop an understanding of the student, and begin to form a relationship with the family of the student with CN during the transition. Another aspect of transition is planning, and there needs to be more work towards finding ways to support teams to be able to use the NZCYP to plan for transition. This is particularly pertinent for students with CN who are leaving secondary school to go to a totally different context that is no longer part of the school system.

Student voice. Another aspect of transition planning that is important is the inclusion of the student with CN's voice. This is part of the student-focussed aspect of successful transition and has not been considered in this study. This aspect was not attempted to due to time constraints, but future research around including the student and how this might occur would benefit the process.

Conclusion and Final Thoughts

This study has explored the perceptions of family, school and professionals around the use of the NZCYP and its contribution towards successful gathering of information, collaboration and planning, and transition for students with CN. This study has revealed that the NZCYP is perceived to be able to successfully gather holistic information about students with CN. The groups have also shown that they were able to work collaboratively when using the NZCYP as they were gathering this information. There was one group who used the NZCYP for planning and the other was confident that they would be able to use the toolkit to plan goals for the student. It appears the NZCYP supported successful transition from the perspective of the new specialist teacher, however, from the perspective of the parent, she was undecided as to whether it had helped with successful transition. Based on these findings and

previous studies, it will be important to continue to explore the use of the NZCYP in a variety of contexts and to specifically investigate further, its use within the context of transition.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Letter of Introduction - Principal



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
TE KURA O TE MATAURANGA

The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) as a Transition Tool for Adolescents and Young Adults with Disabilities Transitioning into or out of a Secondary School

Dear

My name is Jacquie Tonks and I am a Masters student in the Educational Psychology program at Massey University. I am writing to inform you about a research project that I am conducting and to request your assistance in recruiting participants.

The aim of this project is to explore the use of The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) (McLaughlin, Budd, & Clendon, 2017), as a transition tool for adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of secondary school. The NZCYP is designed to support teachers, families, and specialists to reflect on and organize their understanding of a child's strengths and limitations; sensory function; participation at school, home, and in the community; and interests and preferences. Transition is a time of change for students and with that comes both uncertainty and opportunity. If this process is managed well, the uncertainties can be minimized whilst the opportunities are maximized. Whilst transition is recognized to be important, there are few tools available for collecting information in a meaningful and relevant way. The NZCYP provides an option that may be useful to support this process.

The project will be carried out during Terms 3 and 4, 2018. Initially, there will be a training session for all team members to learn about the NZCYP and how it is to be used. This session will take a maximum of 1-hour. Next individuals will be asked to complete the NZCYP individually and then to meet as a team to use the NZCYP within their transition team for planning purposes. Thirdly, there will be a semi-structured focus group interview with the team to assess how the NZCYP was used and its perceived effectiveness for collaboration and planning. This will take no longer than 1-hour. There may be a need to interview some members of the team individually and if required these will take between 20-30 minutes. Finally, I would like to conduct some follow-up with team members in Term 1 of 2019 to assess how the NZCYP has assisted in transition. This would be in the form of a short survey. Please note, for the purposes of this research, no data will be collected about the student for use in the study.

I am recruiting two teams that are involved with a student who is transitioning either into or out of a secondary setting. If you grant approval, I would like to request your assistance to facilitate the process by:

1. Sharing the attached Information Sheet with your school's SENCO.
2. Asking your school's SENCO to identify a student in transition, and to contact parents and obtain their consent to proceed with the project.
3. Once parent/caregiver consent has been obtained, asking your school's SENCO to share the Information Sheet with selected staff to be recruited to the research team.
4. Asking your SENCO to contact me so we can liaise with me.

If you have any questions relating to the project, please call my research supervisors Dr. Julia Budd on **06 356 9099 ext 84412** or Dr. Sally Clendon on **09 414 0800 ext 43537**.

Thank you for considering this request for assistance. I would be most willing to meet with you to provide further information and explanation about the project.

Yours sincerely,

Jacquie Tonks
Masters Student
Educational Psychology Programme
Institute of Education

Appendix B: Consent Form – Principal



The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) as a Transition Tool for Adolescents and Young Adults with Disabilities Transitioning into or out of a Secondary School

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the letter requesting participation of my school in the Research Project.

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to my school participating in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Full Name - printed _____

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet



The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) as a Transition Tool for Adolescents and Young Adults with Disabilities Transitioning into or out of a Secondary School

Participant Information Sheet

Researcher Introduction

My name is Jacquie Tonks and I am completing my Master of Educational Psychology degree at Massey University under the supervision of Dr Julia Budd and Dr Sally Clendon.

Project Description and Invitation

This project involves gathering stakeholder feedback on the use of the New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) (McLaughlin, Budd, & Clendon, 2007). The NZCYP was designed to support teachers, teacher aides, families, and specialists to reflect on and organise their understanding of a child's strengths and limitations; sensory function; participation at school, home, and in the community; and interests and preferences. This project will explore the following questions. 1) In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful gathering information for adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of a secondary school? 2) In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful collaboration and planning for adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of a secondary school? 3) In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful transition for adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of a secondary school?

Participant Recruitment

You are receiving this information sheet and consent form because the Principal of X school has been approached and has granted permission to recruit teams (including parents, teachers, and other professionals) involved with the transition of adolescents and young adults with disabilities.

Project Procedure

Your contribution to this project is invited as a team member collaborator for the key activities described below. Please note that team members can participate in Key Activities 1 & 2 but choose not to participate in the research study (Key Activities 3 and 4).

Key Activity 1: I will provide team training and support to use the NZCYP. This will involve a 1-hour session to learn about the NZCYP and the different forms available. The session will be semi-structured and you will be provided with opportunities to ask questions.

Key Activity 2: Following the training, you will complete the NZCYP individually and then you will meet as a team to use the information gathered to plan for the adolescent or young adult in transition. The data gathered about the student in this process will not be available for me to use in my research and will be kept confidential to the team.

Key Activity 3: I will conduct a semi-structured focus group and/or interview with you and your team after you have used the NZCYP to elicit your perceptions about the NZCYP as a tool to support transition and the extent to which it was useful for collaboration and planning. Focus groups are expected to take a maximum of 60

minutes. You may also wish to give information individually or I may want to ask you information separately in which case individual interviews are expected to take between 20-30 minutes per participant. Focus groups and interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Prior to the focus group, you will be required to provide some basic information about yourself including gender, ethnicity and your role in the team, for summative descriptive purposes only. It will not be possible for you to withdraw your data from the focus group discussions.

Key Activity 4: I will conduct a short follow-up interview post-transition with relevant members of the team to ascertain how the information gathered has been useful post-transition.

It is not expected that you or other participants will experience any harm or discomfort because of your participation in the project. Potential benefits may include learning about alternative methods for educational planning, and transition. Perhaps also something about provided better transition for the student.

All data gathered for this study will be kept in a secure and confidential manner. You may need to specify in a locked cabinet or in a password protected computer and destroyed after 3 years of completion of the project. It may not be possible to keep total anonymity as the teams will recognise each other in the study, but the participants will be asked to keep any information shared in the focus group confidential. A summary of project activities will be provided to all team members at the completion of the project.

Your Rights

Please note that you are under no obligation to consent to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any question;
- Withdraw from the project at any time prior to the beginning of each key activity;
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher; and
- Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

If you participate in an individual interview, you will also have the right to:

- Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview; and
- Amend the transcript sent to you following the interview if you do not feel it accurately represents what was said.

Thank you for considering my request. Please feel free to contact me or my supervisors at any time if you have any questions in relation to this project.

<p>Student Researcher Jacquie Tonks Jacqueline.Tonks.1@uni.massey.ac.nz Phone [REDACTED]</p>	<p>Primary Supervisor Julia Budd J.M.Budd@massey.ac.nz Phone 06 356 9099 ext 84412</p>	<p>Secondary Supervisor Sally Clendon S.Clendon@massey.ac.nz Phone 09 414 0800 ext 43537</p>
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"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Associate Professor Tracy Riley, Acting Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Appendix D: Focus Group Participant Consent Form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
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TE KURA O TE MATAURANGA

The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) as a Transition Tool for Adolescents and Young Adults with Disabilities Transitioning into or out of a Secondary School

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that I have an obligation to respect the privacy of the other members of the group by not disclosing any personal information that they share during our discussion.

I understand that all information I give will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, and the names of all people in the study will be kept confidential by the researcher.

Note: There are limits on confidentiality as there are no formal sanctions on other group participants from disclosing your involvement, identity or what you say to others in the focus group. There are risks in taking part in focus group research and taking part assumes that you are willing to assume those risks.

I agree to participate in the focus group under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Full Name - printed _____

Appendix E: Letter of Introduction - Parent



The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) as a Transition Tool for Adolescents and Young Adults with Disabilities Transitioning into or out of a Secondary School

Dear

My name is Jacquie Tonks and I am a Masters student in the Educational Psychology program at Massey University. I am writing to inform you about a research project that I am conducting and to request your permission to invite your child's transition team to participate in my research.

The aim of this project is to explore the use of The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) (McLaughlin, Budd, & Clendon, 2017), as a transition tool for adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of secondary school. The NZCYP is designed to support teachers, families, and specialists to reflect on and organize their understanding of a child's strengths and limitations; sensory function; participation at school, home, and in the community; and interests and preferences. As you know, transition is a time of change for students and with that comes both uncertainty and opportunity for both you and your child. If this process is managed well, the uncertainties can be minimized whilst the opportunities are maximized. Whilst transition is recognized to be important, there are few tools available for collecting information in a meaningful and relevant way. The NZCYP provides an option that may be useful to support this process.

The project will be carried out during Terms 3 and 4, 2018. Initially, there will be a training session for all team members to learn about the NZCYP and how it is to be used. The team will include family, school personnel, and outside providers such as Ministry of Education staff. This session will take a maximum of 1-hour. Next individual team members will be asked to complete the NZCYP and then to meet as a team to use the NZCYP within their transition team for planning purposes. Thirdly, there will be a semi-structured focus group interview with the team to assess how the NZCYP was used and its perceived effectiveness for collaboration and planning. This will take no longer than 1-hour. There may be a need to interview some members of the team individually and if required, these will take between 20-30 minutes. Finally, I would like to conduct some follow-up with team members in Term 1 of 2019 to assess how the NZCYP has assisted in transition. This would be in the form of a short interview and you would be asked to participate. Please note, for the purposes of this research, no data will be collected about your child for use in the study.

I am recruiting two teams that are involved with a student who is transitioning either into or out of a secondary setting. If you are willing for your child's team to be part of this process, then I request that you sign the consent form.

If you have any questions relating to the project, please call my research supervisors Dr. Julia Budd on **06 356 9099 ext 84412** or Dr. Sally Clendon on **09 414 0800 ext 43537**.

Thank you for considering this request. I would be most willing to meet with you to provide further information and explanation about the project.

Yours sincerely,

Jacquie Tonks
Masters Student
Educational Psychology Programme
Institute of Education

Appendix F: Focus Group Participant Consent Form – Parent Version



The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) as a Transition Tool for Adolescents and Young Adults with Disabilities Transitioning into or out of a Secondary School

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that I have an obligation to respect the privacy of the other members of the group by not disclosing any personal information that they share during our discussion.

I understand that all information I give will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, and the names of all people in the study will be kept confidential by the researcher.

Note: There are limits on confidentiality as there are no formal sanctions on other group participants from disclosing your involvement, identity or what you say to others in the focus group. There are risks in taking part in focus group research and taking part assumes that you are willing to assume those risks.

- I agree to participate in the focus group under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.
- I agree for my child's transition team to be the subject of the focus group under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Full Name - printed _____

Appendix G: Letter of Introduction – Principal Transition School



The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) as a Transition Tool for Adolescents and Young Adults with Disabilities Transitioning into or out of a Secondary School

Dear

My name is Jacquie Tonks and I am a Masters student in the Educational Psychology program at Massey University. I am writing to inform you about a research project that I am conducting.

The aim of this project is to explore the use of The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP, McLaughlin, Budd, & Clendon, 2017) as a transition tool for adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of secondary school. The NZCYP is designed to support teachers, families, and specialists to reflect on and organize their understanding of a child's strengths and limitations; sensory function; participation at school, home, and in the community; and interests and preferences. Transition is a time of change for students and with that comes both uncertainty and opportunity. If this process is managed well, the uncertainties can be minimized whilst the opportunities are maximized. Whilst transition is recognized to be important, there are few tools available for collecting information in a meaningful and relevant way. The NZCYP provides an option that may be useful to support this process.

The project will be carried out during Terms 3 and 4, 2018 and as your school is the choice of the student in transition, staff from your school will be involved in the transition team. The only requirement from your staff is that I would like to conduct some follow-up with team members in Term 1 of 2019 to assess how the NZCYP has assisted in transition. This would be in the form of a short interview. Please note, for the purposes of this research, no data will be collected about the student for use in the study.

If you have any questions relating to the project, please call my research supervisor Dr. Julia Budd on **06 356 9099 ext 84412**

Thank you for considering this request for assistance. I would be most willing to meet with you to provide further information and explanation about the project.

Yours sincerely,

Jacquie Tonks
Masters Student
Educational Psychology Programme
Institute of Education

Appendix H: Information Sheet: Transition School



The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) as a Transition Tool for Adolescents and Young Adults with Disabilities Transitioning into or out of a Secondary School

Participant Information Sheet

Researcher Introduction

My name is Jacquie Tonks and I am completing my Master of Educational Psychology degree at Massey University under the supervision of Dr Julia Budd and Dr Sally Clendon.

Project Description and Invitation

I am undertaking a research project to gather stakeholder feedback on the use of the New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP, McLaughlin, Budd, & Clendon, 2007). The NZCYP was designed to support teachers, teacher aides, families, and specialists to reflect on and organise their understanding of a child's strengths and limitations; sensory function; participation at school, home, and in the community; and interests and preferences. This project will use the NZCYP to gather information to explore 1) In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful information gathering for adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of a secondary school? 2) In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful collaboration and planning for adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of a secondary school? 3) In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful transition for adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of a secondary school?

Participant Recruitment

You are receiving this information sheet and consent form because the Principal of X school has been approached and has granted permission to recruit teams (including parents, teachers, and others) involved with the transition of adolescents and young adults with disabilities.

Project Procedure

Your contribution to this project is invited as a team member collaborator for the key activities described below. **Please note that as you are a member of the school that the student in transitioning to, I require you to participate in Key Activity 4 and remaining Key Activities are voluntary.** I include them so you can understand the context of your place in the research project.

Key Activity 1: I will provide team training and support to use the NZCYP. This will involve a 1-hour session to learn about the NZCYP and the different forms available. The session will be semi-structured and you will be provided with opportunities to ask questions.

Key Activity 2: Following the training, you will complete the NZCYP individually and then you will meet as a team to use the information gathered to help with planning for the adolescent or young adult in transition. The data gathered about the student in this process will not be available for me to use.

Key Activity 3: I will conduct a semi-structured focus group or interview with you and your team after you have used the NZCYP for planning. Semi-structured focus groups or interviews will be designed to elicit your perceptions about the NZCYP as a tool to support transition and the extent to which it was useful for

collaboration and planning. Focus groups are expected to take a maximum of 60 minutes. You may also wish to give information individually or I may want to ask you information separately in which case individual interviews are expected to take between 20-30 minutes per participant. Focus groups or interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Prior to the focus group, you will be required to provide some basic information about yourself including gender, ethnicity and the role in the team, for summative descriptive purposes only. It will not be possible for you to withdraw your data from the focus group discussions.

Key Activity 4: I will conduct a short follow-up interview post-transition with relevant members of the team to ascertain how the information gathered has been useful post-transition.

It is not expected that you or other participants will experience any harm or discomfort because of your participation in the project. Potential benefits may include learning about alternative methods for educational planning, and transition.

All data gathered for this study will be kept in a secure and confidential manner. It may not be possible to keep total anonymity as the teams will recognise each other in the study, but the participants will be asked to keep any information shared in the focus group confidential. A summary of project activities will be provided to all team members at the completion of the project.

Your Rights

Please note that you are under no obligation to consent to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any question;
- Withdraw from the project at any time prior to the beginning of each key activity;
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher; and
- Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

If you participate in an individual interview, you will also have the right to:

- Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview; and
- Amend the transcript sent to you following the interview if you do not feel it accurately represents what was said.

Thank you for considering my request. Please feel free to contact me or my supervisors at any time if you have any questions in relation to this project.

<p>Student Researcher Jacquie Tonks Email: Jacqueline.Tonks.1@uni.massey.ac.nz Phone [REDACTED]</p>	<p>Primary Supervisor Julia Budd Email: J.M.Budd@massey.ac.nz Phone 06 356 9099 ext 84412</p>	<p>Secondary Supervisor Sally Clendon Email: S.Clendon@massey.ac.nz Phone 09 414 0800 ext 43537</p>
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"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Associate Professor Tracy Riley, Acting Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Appendix I: Consent Form – Principal Transition School



The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) as a Transition Tool for Adolescents and Young Adults with Disabilities Transitioning into or out of a Secondary School

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Letter requesting the participation of my staff in the Research Project.

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree for my school, and staff to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Full Name - printed _____

Appendix J: Consent Form – Teacher Transition School



The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) as a Transition Tool for Adolescents and Young Adults with Disabilities Transitioning into or out of a Secondary School

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that all information I give will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, and the names of all people in the study will be kept confidential by the researcher.

Note: There are limits on confidentiality as there are no formal sanctions on other group participants from disclosing your involvement, identity or what you say to others in the focus group. There are risks in taking part in focus group research and taking part assumes that you are willing to assume those risks.

I agree to participate in individual interview as set out in the information sheet.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
Full Name - printed _____

Appendix K: Ethics Approval Letter



Date: 2 May, 2018

Ethics Notification Number: 4000019430

Title: The New Zealand Child and Youth Profile (NZCYP) as a tool for supporting adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of a secondary school

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Associate Professor Tracy Riley, Acting Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish require evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again answering yes to the publication question to provide more information to go before one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

If you wish to print an official copy of this letter, please login to the RIMS system, and under the Reporting section, View Reports you will find a link to run the LR Report.

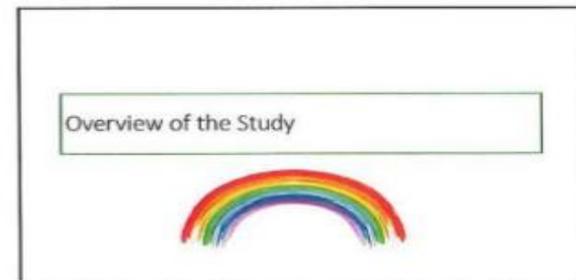
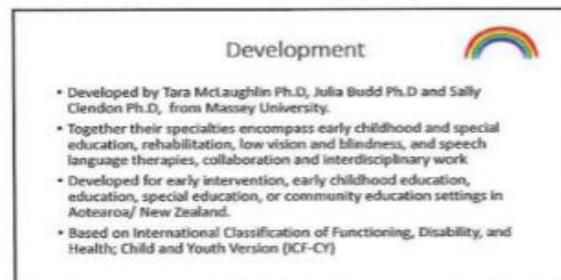
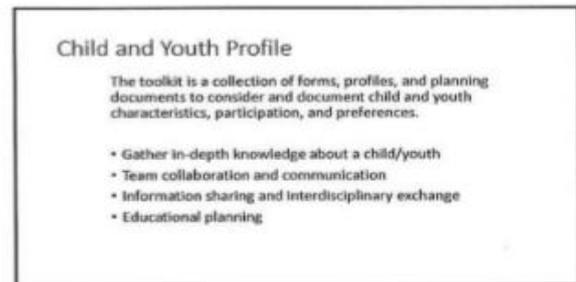
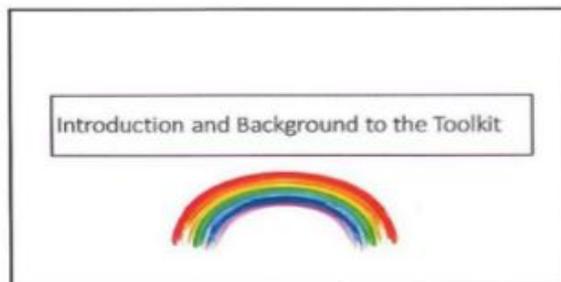
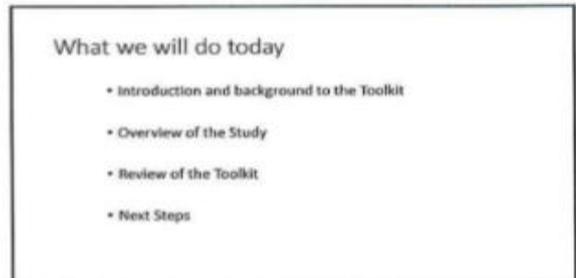
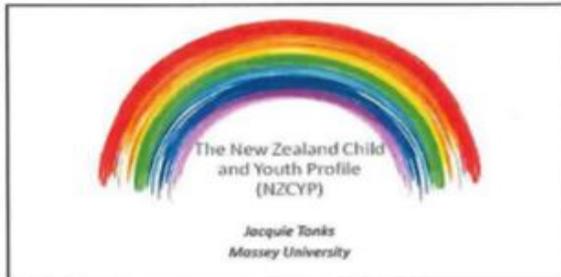
Yours sincerely

Associate Professor Tracy Riley, Dean Research Acting Director (Research Ethics)

Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise

Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, 4442, New Zealand T 06 350 5573; 06 350 5575 F 06 355 7973
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz W <http://humanethics.massey.ac.nz>

Appendix L: Training PowerPoint NZCYP



Transition

My research question:

- In what ways is the NZCYP perceived as contributing to successful collaboration and planning for adolescents and young adults with disabilities transitioning into or out of a secondary school?

Areas of Interest

- Gathering information
- Collaboration
- Planning

This Study

Four-step process to gather your feedback on the NZCYP, I will ask you to:

1. Sign the consent form if willing to participate
2. Participate in this training/information session
3. Try out the NZCYP for a student in transition with your team
4. Participate in a focus group to give us feedback about the toolkit

Review of the Toolkit



- Component parts (10 forms)
- Team make-up
- Ways to use the toolkit

NZCYP includes

- Background Information (BI)
- Sensory Modality Profile (SMP)
- Communication Profile (CP)
- Participation and Access Profile (PAP)
- Functional Ability Profile (FAP)
- Adaptations & Specialised Equipment Profile (ASEP)
- Interests & Preference Profile (IPP)
- Priority Planning Page (PPP)

Background Information (BI)

Background Information (BI) form

Section	CP	PAP	SMP
Personal Information	Full name, Date of birth, Gender, Ethnicity, Address, Contact details	Current school, Previous schools, Year level, Start date	Current school, Previous schools, Year level, Start date
Medical History	Diagnoses, Medications, Allergies, Hospital admissions	Diagnoses, Medications, Allergies, Hospital admissions	Diagnoses, Medications, Allergies, Hospital admissions
Learning and Development	Learning difficulties, Cognitive abilities, Academic performance	Learning difficulties, Cognitive abilities, Academic performance	Learning difficulties, Cognitive abilities, Academic performance
Behavioral and Social	Behavioral issues, Social skills, Peer relationships	Behavioral issues, Social skills, Peer relationships	Behavioral issues, Social skills, Peer relationships
Family and Support	Family structure, Support services, Cultural background	Family structure, Support services, Cultural background	Family structure, Support services, Cultural background

Sensory Modal Profile (SMP)

Person's Name: _____

Occupational Therapist: _____

Client's Age: _____

Client's Sex: _____

Client's Date of Birth: _____

Client's Address: _____

Client's Phone Number: _____

Client's Email Address: _____

Sensory Modality	Client's Score	Interpretation	Recommendations
Visual			
Auditory			
Tactile			
Proprioceptive			
Vestibular			
Interoception			

Note: _____

Communication Profile (CP)

Person's Name: _____

Occupational Therapist: _____

Client's Age: _____

Client's Sex: _____

Client's Date of Birth: _____

Client's Address: _____

Client's Phone Number: _____

Client's Email Address: _____

Communication Area	Client's Score	Interpretation	Recommendations
Receptive Language			
Expressive Language			
Pragmatics			
Phonology			
Fluency			
Comprehension			

Note: _____

Participation and Access Profile (PAP)

Person's Name: _____

Occupational Therapist: _____

Client's Age: _____

Client's Sex: _____

Client's Date of Birth: _____

Client's Address: _____

Client's Phone Number: _____

Client's Email Address: _____

Activity	Client's Score	Interpretation	Recommendations
Self-Care			
Education			
Work			
Leisure			
Community			
Family			

Note: _____

Participation and Access Profile (PAP)

Person's Name: _____

Occupational Therapist: _____

Client's Age: _____

Client's Sex: _____

Client's Date of Birth: _____

Client's Address: _____

Client's Phone Number: _____

Client's Email Address: _____

Activity	Client's Score	Interpretation	Recommendations
Self-Care			
Education			
Work			
Leisure			
Community			
Family			

Note: _____

Functional Ability Profile (FAP)

Person's Name: _____

Occupational Therapist: _____

Client's Age: _____

Client's Sex: _____

Client's Date of Birth: _____

Client's Address: _____

Client's Phone Number: _____

Client's Email Address: _____

Activity	Client's Score	Interpretation	Recommendations
Self-Care			
Education			
Work			
Leisure			
Community			
Family			

Note: _____

Adaptation and Specialised Equipment Profile (ASFP)

Person's Name: _____

Occupational Therapist: _____

Client's Age: _____

Client's Sex: _____

Client's Date of Birth: _____

Client's Address: _____

Client's Phone Number: _____

Client's Email Address: _____

Equipment	Client's Score	Interpretation	Recommendations
Computer			
Tablet			
Smartphone			
Smartwatch			
Smart TV			
Smart Home			

Note: _____

Interests & Preferences Profile (IPP)

Build with the young person

Build with the young person and family and/or support staff. This is a personal profile and should be used to inform the young person's educational plan. It is not a diagnostic tool.

Area	Interests	Preferences	Needs
Personality			
Learning style			
Communication			
Self-awareness			
Self-esteem			
Self-regulation			
Self-advocacy			
Self-advocacy skills			
Self-advocacy strategies			
Self-advocacy goals			
Self-advocacy support			

Priority Planning Page (PPP) Information Summary

Build with the young person and family and/or support staff

Build with the young person and family and/or support staff. This is a personal profile and should be used to inform the young person's educational plan. It is not a diagnostic tool.

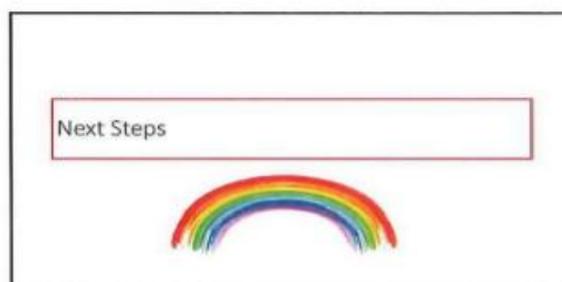
Area	Interests	Preferences	Needs
Personality			
Learning style			
Communication			
Self-awareness			
Self-esteem			
Self-regulation			
Self-advocacy			
Self-advocacy skills			
Self-advocacy strategies			
Self-advocacy goals			
Self-advocacy support			

Priority Planning Page (PPP) Educational Plan

Build with the young person and family and/or support staff

Build with the young person and family and/or support staff. This is a personal profile and should be used to inform the young person's educational plan. It is not a diagnostic tool.

Area	Interests	Preferences	Needs
Personality			
Learning style			
Communication			
Self-awareness			
Self-esteem			
Self-regulation			
Self-advocacy			
Self-advocacy skills			
Self-advocacy strategies			
Self-advocacy goals			
Self-advocacy support			



- ### Where to from here?
- Take the profile and fill it in as individuals about the young person
 - Families can work together with their young person
 - Come back together in two-three weeks
 - Fill in the PPP summary pages together
 - When filling out the PPP for Educational Planning, keep transition the focus and what is required
 - I will return after this to talk with you all about your experiences in using the toolkit
-

Questions, Comments, Concerns, Ideas



Thank You!



Appendix M: Interview Schedule – Focus Group

Focus Group Format and Questions

Welcome

Kia ora everyone and thank you for coming to participate in this focus group interview today. Also, thanks for working together and agreeing to use the toolkit for this transition.

I am committed to trying and find ways to make transition easier for our students with learning support needs and their families and for the schools that are involved in the process. That is why I am involved in this research and why I am incredibly grateful to you each for being part of this process.

Overview of the topic

The purpose of this interview is to gather your experiences and opinions as individuals who are supporting the transition of a child with learning support needs into another educational setting. I am seeking your views on how your educational team used the New Zealand Child and Youth Profile, how it helped for you to gather together information about your student in preparation for transition and how it facilitated your team to be able to work together in this process. To keep things brief, from here on in I will refer to the New Zealand Child and Youth Profile as “the toolkit”. At this point I would also like to reiterate that you have the right to decline to answer any question that I ask.

Ground rules

I’ll be asking you a series of questions. I want you to discuss these questions. I’m interested in hearing lots of different experiences and opinions—as much as you can tell me about my questions.

There are no wrong answers. I expect that you will have differing points of view. Please share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said.

Don’t feel like you must respond directly to me all the time. If you want to follow up on something that someone has said, you want to agree, or disagree, or give an example, feel free to do that. Feel free to have a conversation with one another about these questions. I am here to ask questions, listen, and make sure everyone has a chance to share. I am interested in hearing from each of you. So, if you are talking a lot, I may ask you to give others a chance. And if you aren’t saying much, I may call on you. I just want to make sure all of you have a chance to share your ideas.

We're recording the session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. No names will be included in any research reports. Your comments are confidential.

If you have a cell phone, please put it on the quiet mode, and if you need to take a call, please step out to do so.

Opening questions

Firstly, can you please introduce who you each are, and state your relationship to the student

It's a few weeks since I first gave you the toolkit, and since then you have individually filled it out and then come together as a group. I want to first focus on your experience working on the toolkit and what was that like? In particular, did it change or strengthen any of the ideas you had previously held about the student?

Now, when you came together as group, what was the experience like of bringing together all the information that you had?

Do you now feel like you have an all-encompassing and detailed picture for this student?

Planning

First, a retrospective question about planning for the student's education. How useful do you think it would have been, to have had this type of toolkit throughout this student's schooling to support educational planning?

How did you find using the toolkit to help with educational planning, especially looking towards transition and future goals for the student?

What worked well?

What would you do differently in the future?

What were the strengths and weaknesses of using the toolkit?

Would you use it with other students in the future – why or why not?

Collaboration

Part of my research is trying to see how the toolkit aids in collaboration. In what ways did you perceive the Toolkit as contributing to successful collaboration?

In what ways did you perceive the Toolkit as hindering successful collaboration?

Do you each feel like you are an equal member of the team? Why do you think this is so?

How can the Toolkit be used to improve collaboration between team members in educational planning?

Do you think it can be used to enhance collaboration? If so, how might this happen?

Transition

Transition for a family and student can be quite a difficult time. Do you think that this toolkit will help in the transition of this student?

In what ways do you think it will help with their transition?

Are there any ways in which the toolkit may be unhelpful in transition?

How do you imagine or how would you like the future school to use this toolkit? Would you like to see it used with this student at the next stage of their schooling?

Final question

Is there anything else that you would like to share about this experience?

Many thanks for sharing your ideas and experiences with me. After listening to this recording, I may want to approach some of you individually to clarify something and ask you more. Are you alright if I do this?

I just have these cards of thanks to give to you and please help yourself to chocolate on the way out

I quite like these prompts from Jo to potentially use and to jog my memory of what are useful prompts

Prompts

Tell me more about...?

What do you mean when you say...?

Can you give me an example of...?

What was it like for you when...?

What did you do then...?

How is it...?

Why is it...?

How do you feel?

How does that affect...?

Appendix N: Interview Schedule – Transition School

Questions for school that student transitioned to:

- How has the transition gone – positive aspects? Any negative?
- You received the Toolkit with this student what were the positive and negative aspects about this?
- How do you use the Toolkit?
- How has it help you?
- What did you learn about the student from the Toolkit
- Did it help you to set goals for the student?

Appendix O: Interview Schedule – Parent transition

Questions for parent after transition:

- How has it been going for your child at the new school so far?
- What has gone well with her transition to the new school?
- Have there been things that have not gone so well?
- Do you think the Toolkit that you help fill in at the previous school has helped with your child's transition?
- In what ways do you think it helped?
- Do you think it has been used at her new school? – how do you know?

Appendix P: Codebook

Codebook: Perceptions of Using the Toolkit

Codes	Description	Example
Depiction of the child	Information about the child including past, present and future situations and the characteristics that make them who they are. Information about the child in different settings that they are in	<p><i>"there was a lot more background information, that got filled in, you know right back when she was a baby"</i></p> <p><i>"you're looking at the student and their background, then as a person, their interests, their likes and dislikes"</i></p> <p><i>"it was interesting to see how she's similar at home to what she is at school, and the differences as well"</i></p>
Understanding	Instances where participants have gained a better understanding of the child and their strengths and needs either in pre or post transition setting	<p><i>"it made us think about some of the things and the way she acts, and maybe made us think about why she does a particular thing"</i></p> <p><i>"there were a couple of lightbulb moments"</i></p>
Goals	When goals have been identified for the child – either current or potential goals for the future	<p><i>"summary of her, what she is doing now and what we see as her goals"</i></p> <p><i>"I think this gives you an idea of some of the experience's that he's had which might influence where he might go"</i></p>
Working together	Instances when the team identified that they had been working together and helping each other when using the NZCYP	<p><i>"you sort of did have to work together as a group to work out what they meant"</i></p> <p><i>"we were sharing some thoughts and ideas and maybe digging a bit deeper on a few things"</i></p>
Everyone's viewpoint	Refers to instances when all perspectives and voices have been	<i>"everyone had something different to bring to it"</i>

	used and needed to work on the NZCYP	<i>"big team approach, brought out different things"</i>
Focussing	Shows how the NZCYP has kept the group or individuals focussed on the task	<i>"it focussed our attention as we were going along"</i> <i>"I tend to go off on tangents, this does keep you focussed"</i>
Expert parents	Demonstrating that parents are required in the process as they have information and a perspective that others do not	<i>"because that's history for me, you know, I already know that"</i> <i>" Mum had information there which is going back to you know when he was at pre-school"</i>
Being included	Refers to parents being an important and essential part of the process	<i>"so I see mum as a really valuable resource"</i>
Finding form difficult	Instances where the team have found the NZCYP difficult to use and understand	<i>"My husband and I looked at each other and thought – "What does this mean?""</i>
Helpfulness	Instances when there is uncertainty as to whether the NZCYP supported transition or if it was even referred to	<i>"I'm not too sure, to be honest whether it was helpful or not in that sense. I'm undecided"</i>
Information sharing	Aspirations for how information from NZCYP would be shared in the future and how past information could have been shared better. Includes how information can be lost and forgotten over the years. Also, how information was shared in transition	<i>"why has none of this information come forward from the previous school?"</i> <i>"hopefully easier for the school she's going to cause they can start from there and they'll have a lot of background information"</i>
Starting point	The NZCYP is considered as a starting point to being able to build towards transition	<i>"I think it really is a good information gatherer to share that with the new team will be really valuable then they can be prepared when she arrives and as I said before you've</i>

	or to pass information onto next context	<i>got something to go back to if things aren't working"</i>
Usefulness	The usefulness of the NZCYP is mentioned for current and future settings. Also includes that teams would use it again	<i>"I think it's a really great idea, it's quite exciting that something like this could happen for kids" "I think with some teams that there would be really good buy in and especially with some the more complex kids, it would be quite valuable"</i>
Solutions to difficulties	Suggestions from the team as to how they overcame difficulties and improvements	<i>"I would have liked to have seen examples to know if we were on the right track" "let's put it in digital form, send it off, keep it, add to it and if that could happen, it would just keep going, an up to date document"</i>