

Transitions

Supporting transitions - Top tips



'Transitions are a process, not an event'.
(Birth to 5 matters 2021)

Young children can go through a lot of transitions in their day to day lives: Changes in the family such as new siblings or moving house; Attending childcare for the first time; Moving room within a nursery; Starting school.

For a smooth transition it's essential that children feel secure, comfortable, and successful with change being introduced gradually. Transition can be a stressful time for children and families which can have a far-reaching impact on their emotional well-being. Even small changes such as moving room in a nursery, changing bedroom at home can have a big impact on a child.

These useful tips to transition can be used to help you reflect on your practice and develop outstanding practice in supporting settings, families and children through a transient time.

TOP TIPS - Things that early year's settings, schools and parents can do to help a child with a transition.

1. Think about the transition process from the child's perspective and their needs throughout.
2. Include the child's voice, how do they feel? How do you know?
3. Be proactive in communicating and building relationships with the relevant next key contact, finding out who to share information with, who to go with questions.

4. Find out and draw up a timeline for the academic year of key dates, opportunities and events that will impact the child and to provide a partnership approach.
5. Be clear about readiness for school expectations – the settings role, the family's role & the schools.
6. Maintain working relationships to support transitions throughout the academic year.
7. Communicate with parents and carers - reassure, find out children's strengths and areas for support - they must be recognised as an active partner in supporting effective transitions.
8. List children's likes/dislikes and display where members of the team can see.
9. Inform other/all members of staff working with the children of any key information to aid transitions, not just the key person.
10. Discuss hygiene, toileting and expectations with preschool/nursery/carers/parents.
11. Share familiar routines and strategies known to the child and that are unique to them. This may include child's specific needs around SEND, Safeguarding, Early Help, EAL etc.
12. Use photos as a visual reference point to aid familiarity for the child E.g., ask carers to send a photo from home to display in the environment before they start to help with transitions.
13. Where possible, have a safe place for each child to keep a special object/toy from home.
14. Promote the importance of the home learning environment E.g., Encourage engagement in family learning programmes.
15. Make clear expectations of what needs to be provided by the parents E.g., request a change of clothes from home, wellies for outdoor play, nappies, and wipes etc.

16. Consider using short film clips to include a welcome tour of any new environment and any key information. E.g. staff introduction, where they will hang their coat, where they will eat etc. How could you include the children in this?
17. Consider organising visits both in the home and the setting/school for all partners to gain a deeper understanding of the environments the child has been in and may be transitioning into. Building a better picture of the day in the life of the child.
18. Explore what transition information is required to prompt meaningful discussion about the individual child, their unique needs etc.
19. Consider how stay and play sessions can be a useful opportunity to develop relationships.
20. Work with other professionals and agencies that can support the process e.g. EYST, family Learning, Health Visitors etc.
21. Support parents with any operational tasks, e.g. supporting the admissions process for school, applying for funding, SENIF support etc.

TAKE NOTE: This is not an exhaustive list, and you should consider the child's individual journey when managing any transition.

TASK

Use the tips above to reflect on your current practice, discuss as a team and establish an action plan of next steps towards promoting positive transitions.