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**Newcastle Early Years
Transition Guidance**

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**Introduction**

Children make many transitions in their lives. Transitions are an important part of life and create opportunities to experience something new. However, it is important to recognise that transitions can create uncertainty for children and their families. Types of transitions can include:

* Starting a new educational setting
* Moving rooms or classes
* Change of key worker or teacher
* Change of routines
* Starting a new activity or group
* Moving schools
* Moving phases e.g. EYFS to KS1 to KS2
* Moving to a new house
* Moving to a new country
* Bereavements
* New births in the family

However, it is also important to recognise that transitions happen every day:

* Getting out of bed
* Having meals and snacks
* Going to an early years provider or school
* Activities starting and finishing
* Changes in adults and carers
* Going outdoors
* Going to activities and clubs
* Going back home

This guidance is to help practitioners to further understand their important role in ensuring transitions are successful, whether they are daily transitions or bigger life transition.

**Transitions into Early Years Provision**

Transitions should be seen as a process not an event, and should be planned for and discussed with children and families. Early years providers should communicate information which will secure continuity of experience for the child between settings and home. The EYFS highlights the importance of ensuring smooth transitions to support children’s emotional wellbeing and facilitate progression in their learning and development .

Those who are about to move to another early years setting will need a carefully planned transition. It is paramount that personal, social and emotional development is a priority. The DfE Early Years Good Practice Guide Research Project highlighted 3 broad areas for a successful transition:

* Gathering information about the child
* Working in partnership with the other setting
* Providing information and support to parents and carers

There are key factors in supporting a good transition and these include:

* A **commitment** from all professionals to support every child fully, with a shared and consistent approach
* A commitment to develop clear **communication** links
* **Continuity** of support for children transferring from a provider
* Working in **partnership** with parents

**Key principles for good practice in supporting
successful early years transitions**

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| **Unique Child** |
| * Practitioners must acknowledge that all children are unique and the experiences of transition will be individual to each child. The process must fit each individual child, rather than the child having to fit into the process.
* Recognise that all children can be vulnerable at times of change, particularly those with SEND. Planning for these children will need additional, flexible support.
* Children’s experiences, memories, views and feelings should be respected and responded to. Key adults should be aware of children’s interests, background, culture, religion, home language, strengths, learning styles and developmental milestones. If the adults who are supporting children are knowledgeable about them, then they will be able to adapt the situation to meet the needs of individual children during the transition process.
* It is important that all children experience a positive transition and that they are prepared for the change. With appropriate preparation and understanding, children are more likely to feel secure and will settle more easily into their new environment.
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| **Positive Relationships** |
| * Transitions can be eased by careful proactive planning, sharing of information and mutual visiting between parents, carers and professionals.
* Parents are the most significant people in a child’s life and have in depth knowledge and understanding about their children. Listen to and acknowledge the important role of parents and carers throughout the transition process. Parents’ knowledge and skills of the child must be valued, and they should be fully involved in the whole transition process. A strong partnership enables the family and settings to plan together to support the transition.
* Working together is an essential element of an effective transition. If a child is moving on to another setting then both providers must work together, to establish a clear understanding of one another’s aims, purpose and philosophy.
* Offer a range of opportunities for parents to access information about the transition process. This could include open days, information events, visits to the setting, newsletters, film clips and information on social media.
* The role of the key person must be valued. The key person should build a positive and trusting relationship with parents and wider family members. It is important that the key person recognises the individual backgrounds of families, to ensure they are sensitive to individual circumstances, this will ensure successful relationships are developed from the earliest opportunity.
* If a child or family has wider services involved, then this information should be passed on to the new setting with consent from the professionals and parents. There should be multi agency meetings arranged prior to the transition to ensure that key messages are passed on to the key person in the new setting.
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| **Enabling Environments** |
| * Children cope better with transitions when conditions are similar, communication is encouraged, and the process of change takes place gradually over time.
* New settings should share information with parents and the child’s current setting, about routines, familiar adults, processes etc, to make the transition as smooth as possible. This could include film clips, photos, booklets. This will enable children to know more about the new setting and start to prepare for the changes.
* The emotions that come with change can be successfully handled by children when their new setting has a clear, welcoming procedure which is flexible to meet the needs of individual children.
* Settings need to ensure they have universally available provision in place, following the Universally Available Guidance for Early Years Settings. This will ensure continuity for children who are not yet at their expected stage of development, those who have EAL or those who are new to the country. This includes visual timetables, Makaton, objects of reference, as well as strategies to support individual children from the guidance depending on their needs.
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| **Children Learn and Develop in Different Ways and at Different Rates** |
| * Ensure that consideration is given to the child’s holistic needs. It is important to ensure that the continuity of children’s experiences involves all aspects of their care and learning.
* Current settings need to ensure that individual information about children is passed on. Every child is unique, and it is important that new settings are aware of each individual child, what their needs are and how the current setting has supported those needs.
* Settings need to ensure they adapt to the needs of individual children, and they are prepared to be flexible. They need to gather as much information as possible about each new child, and consider how resources, routines and procedures need to be adapted to ensure a successful transition.
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**Important Messages for the Sending Early Years Provision**

* Cohort transition document – complete one document for each forwarding setting and ensure all children are included.
* All About Me - for children with SEND or emerging needs complete an All About Me Booklet where appropriate, liaising with parents. Ensure you share information about any other agencies who are involved with a child or their family.
* Contact the receiving early years setting – to discuss transition procedures. Find out if they have a transition booklet for new children, or videos on their website of their new room/class and new practitioners/teachers.
* Visits - organise visits to your setting by the key person from the receiving early years provider and visits for the children to their new setting.
* Website and social media - share school website details with parents and carers and encourage them to explore information being offered by schools on their websites. This will help parents to prepare what they need in advance, introduce them to members of the early years team and provide key information about starting school arrangements.
* Talk to the children about their new setting – share transition booklets, photos and video clips if you have them. Provide opportunities to prepare for transition through play e.g., photographs of the different provision children are moving to.
* Books about starting school - There are lots of wonderful books available to support children as they make the transition into school. The book trust has some suggested books about children starting school <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/s/starting-school/>
* Supporting independence for children who are starting reception – encourage children to develop their self-help skills, including toileting, washing hands, dressing, putting on their own shoes and coats, using knives and forks at meals times etc.
* Endings – children are more likely to have positive feelings about transitioning from one experience to the next if they have a well-rounded ending, one that has been marked by a sense of closure. Consider how you are going to create a positive ending for the children, for example a celebration event.

**Important Messages for the Receiving Early Years Provision**

* Transition documents - familiarise yourself with transition documents including All About Me, EHCPs, SEN support plans and cohort transition tracker.
* Visits - organise visits to see children in their current early years provision and arrange for them to visit your setting.
* Welcome pack – have a welcome pack for new parents and children. Consider what information you want the family and child to know about your setting. Include documents for them to complete which will give you more information about the child and their wider background. You could have a booklet or social story for children which introduces the entrance area, key adults, uniform, routines, menu examples, the rooms and outdoor spaces. This will help to prepare children and families and support them with the settling in process
* Website and social media - update your setting website or social media to ensure the most up to date information is available regarding usual daily routines, meals, uniform, staffing etc.
* Stay in touch - keep in touch with your new parents and carers. This may be through emails, letters or phone calls, whichever channel of communication works best for you and your new families. Encourage the family to create an all about me document for their child, so you know more about them and their interests, including photos.
* Create a video that is a tour of your setting, so that new families and children know what it looks like.
* Contact relevant outside agencies - make contact with agencies identified on transition documents.
* Emotional wellbeing - You may wish to start to plan learning opportunities, focussing on emotional wellbeing and interests of children for your key group. There are lots of age appropriate and relevant picture books which may act as a good starting point for planning. Some suggestions can be found here: <https://www.booksfortopics.com/mental-health>

**Settling children into their new Early Years Provision**

All children will need a structured and successful transition into their early years setting, even if they have attended another setting previously. It is important to allow as much time as possible for both the child, key person and family to get to know each other and to support the transition into the setting. The key person has an important role in developing positive and supportive relationships with parents and helping their child to feel secure and confident in a new setting. Some key elements to consider include:

* Reflect on how you choose the child’s key worker, is it the adult that the child bonded with most during their first visit?
* Ensure the key person is available during the transition process e.g. that they are not on holiday.
* If a child doesn’t bond with their key worker, consider changing to an adult who the child has become attached to.
* Every child is unique, and the transition process should reflect this.
* During the settling-in period, parents should have the opportunity to say goodbye in a calm and brief manner, and tell their child when they will be back, so that a child is confident that their parents will return.

You could adopt a trusted strategy to settle children in, such as Penny Tassoni’s 5 Step approach (with COVID Control Measures in place where necessary) to support the wellbeing of children and families. The five step approach is:

1. The child plays with key person while the parent is alongside. After a while, the parent disengages from the activity although is present.
2. The child plays with the key person with the parent alongside. The parent then moves away slightly to pick something up e.g. a resource at the back of the room.
3. The child plays with the key person and the parent is alongside at first. But then parent strolls in and out of sight e.g. they get something from a cupboard in the room.
4. The child plays with the key person and the parent then pops out of the room to collect an object e.g. a sticker for the child. The parent confidently tells the child that they are going to do this and then goes, but they are only absent for 1 minute and build this up to 5 minutes.
5. The child plays with the key person and then the parent tells the child they are leaving the room. The parent pops out for 5 minutes and builds this up to 20 minutes.

For some children this process can be completed during a couple of settling in visits and for others it may need to be a more gradual process over a few weeks. However, it is important that all stages are covered in a timescale that is appropriate for each individual child, to build up the child’s confidence in staying in the setting without their parents.

**Transitions for children with SEND or emerging needs**

Transition for a child with SEND or those with emerging needs will require some additional planning to ensure that it is smooth and successful.

Once they have received information about the next early years provision the child will be moving on to, it is considered good practice for early year’s providers to arrange a transition meeting to discuss the settling-in arrangements.

Planning for transition into reception should take place the term before the child is due to start, to enable sufficient time for any plans or support to be put into place. Parents and any professionals involved with the child should be invited to the early years setting for a transition meeting. The expectation is that the Senco will coordinate the meeting in a professional and timely way.

The sending setting should complete an ‘All About Me’ Transition form for each child who has identified or emerging needs. Any Support plans and professional reports should also be given to the new setting, with appropriate consent gained as necessary.

**Links to additional resources**:

* For early years providers
	+ <https://www.pacey.org.uk/partners/school-ready/preparation/#Resources%20for%20childcare%20professionals%20and%20schools>
	+ <https://www.booksfortopics.com/mental-health>
	+ <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/s/starting-school/>
* For parents/carers
	+ <https://www.pacey.org.uk/partners/school-ready/preparation/#Resources%20for%20parents>

**Early Years Cohort Transition Information**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sending setting:  | Receiving Setting:  | Transition Term Date: |
| Child’s Name | DOB | On track in C&L | On track in PSED | On track in PD | ECHP | Sen Support Plan | Emerging needs | Additional Information Attached |
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My name is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I live with: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

At home our language is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

These people help to look after me:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

All About Me

|  |
| --- |
| **Insert photo here** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Professional involvement | Contact DetailsEmail and telephone | Report attached |
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |

EAL: yes/no EHAP: yes/no

SEN Support: yes/no LAC: yes/no

Health Visitor involved yes/no

Other additional information about me:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Form Completed by:  | Date: | Job Title: |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Communication and Interaction | Cognition and Learning | Emotional, Social and Mental Health | Sensory and/ or physical | Health |

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| --- |
| Areas of Need (highlight as appropriate) |

What I like to do:

What I can do and what I need:

What I find difficult (barriers to learning):



What helps me to learn (useful strategies):



Things my family want you to know about me:



All About Me

|  |
| --- |
| **Insert photo here** |

My name is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I live with: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

At home our language is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

These people help to look after me: \_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Communication and Interaction | Cognition and Learning | Emotional, Social and Mental Health | Sensory and/ or physical | Health |

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| Areas of Need (highlight as appropriate)What I like to do:   |

What helps me to learn (useful strategies):

What I find difficult (barriers to learning):

My physical and toileting needs:

My emotional needs

Any medical needs or feeding needs:

What my family would like you to know about me:

What I can do and what I need

Communication, how I make my needs known:

My sensory needs:

What I can do and what I need

Communication, how I make my needs known:

My physical and toileting needs:

Any medical needs or feeding needs:

My emotional needs

My sensory needs:



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| Professional involvement | Contact DetailsEmail and telephone | Report attached |
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People who help me

EHCP: yes/no EAL: yes/no

SEN Support: yes/no LAC: yes/no

EHAP: yes/no

Health visitor involved: yes/no

Other additional information about me:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Form Completed by:   | Date: | Job Title |

**y** **Early Years**

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| --- | --- |
| **Name:** | **Setting:** |
| **Date of Birth & Age in months** | **Start date of plan:** |
| **Areas of need:**Cognition and Learning (C&L) Communication and Interaction (C&I)Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Sensory and Physical (S&PH) | **Professionals involved:** |
| **My parents want you to know this about me:** | **Things I like/ what is important to me:** | **I communicate:** | **I find it hard when:** |

**My Early Years SEN Support Plan**

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| --- |
| **My strengths and achievements:** |
| **My long-term targets** | **My short-term targets** | **How will you help me do this in my setting?** | **How can my parents support me at home?** | **How did I get on?** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
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| **Date of plan:** **Review Date:** | **Plan written by:****Signature:** | **Parents name:****Signature:** |
| **Next steps discussed at my review meeting:**  |