

Supporting Children with Transitions Throughout the Day.

Top Tips

Top tips to support children during transitions throughout the days:

1. **Use Visual Support:** Use visual timetables and widget symbols to support children to understand the routines throughout the day, so they know what is happening now and what will happen next.
2. **Be consistent:** Keep routines familiar to support children with understanding what will happen next.
3. **Friendship Groups and Introductions:** Consider friendship groups and introduce children to each other. Encourage interactions among peers from different carers within the setting.
4. **Understanding a Child's Day:** Learn about a child's daily routine and identify the key people involved in their day. This includes practitioners, teachers, and other staff members.
5. **Key Message Board:** Set up a message board to record important daily information. Use it for communication between caregivers and parents.
6. **Staggered Communication:** Coordinate with carers during key person handovers. Share relevant updates and insights about each child.
7. **Photo Board of Adults:** Create a photo board featuring adults the children will encounter during their day. Include wider staff members such as Managers, lunchtime supervisors, caretakers, first aiders, and administrative staff.
8. **Contact Information:** Maintain up-to-date contact details for all carers. This ensures efficient communication and emergency response.
9. **Record of Collection:** Keep an accessible record of who collects the child on specific days. This prevents confusion and ensures child safety.
10. **Transitions Between Settings:** If a child attends multiple settings during the week, collaborate with parents and carers to understand children's transitions between different settings throughout the week.

Remember, these practices contribute to a supportive and well-coordinated environment for children as they move through their day!

Children may experience multiple different transitions throughout the day, these may include:

- Moving between different settings, such as from home to childminder, nursery, grandparents, or extended family.
- Transitions between different activities, such as free play to carpet time, to tidy up time, to snack time etc.
- Transitions between environments, such as indoors and outdoors.
- Leaving a setting, for example nursery, school or a childminder and saying goodbye.

The transitions a child may experience throughout the day, may be different every day, each week, month, or year!

Children's social, emotional and educational needs are central to any transition between one setting and another, or within one setting. Some children and their parents and carers will find transition times stressful, while others will enjoy the experience. Effective communication between settings is key to ensuring that children's needs are met and there is continuity in their learning and care.

This document provides practical ideas and suggestions for you to help children prepare to move from one stage of their learning journey to the next.



Routines and Structure

Routines and structure increase the predictability of the day for young children which makes them feel safe and secure. Routines help manage transitions between activities, locations, and caregivers. Having in place clear routines and structures, and supporting children to understand and follow these, children will learn to adapt to change and cope with transitions more smoothly.

Consistent routines provide a sense of predictability and security for children. Knowing what to expect throughout the day helps reduce anxiety and promotes emotional stability. When children feel secure, they are more likely to explore, learn, and engage in positive interactions.

Routines also provide opportunities for language development. As adults repeat phrases and describe activities during routines, for example snack time, outside time, mealtime, children learn new words and concepts.

Visual supports play a crucial role in enhancing routines and providing clarity for young children. Here are some visual supports which you may like to add to your provision to support all children:

Visual Timetable

A visual timetable with pictures of the activities of the day shows children what the plan of the day is. This should be referred to by adults during the day as this models to the children how to use the timetable.



Choice Boards or Choice Bags

Create choice boards with pictures or symbols or a choice bag containing objects which representing different options (e.g., activities, snacks, or play areas). Children can use these boards or objects to make choices independently, promoting autonomy and reducing anxiety.

Now and Next boards

Use a “Now and Next” board to illustrate the sequence of events, for example: “First, tidy up toys. Then, story time.” This helps children understand what comes next and reduces uncertainty.

Visual Schedules for Transitions

Develop visual routines specifically for transitions (e.g., arrival, departure, sleep time). Include pictures or icons representing each step in the transition process. Refer to the routine consistently to guide children through changes.

Routine Charts

Create routine charts that outline the daily schedule. Include pictures or symbols for waking up, mealtime, playtime, etc. Place the chart at the child’s eye level for easy reference.

Visual Cues for Behaviour Expectations

Use visual cues, such as widge symbols, to reinforce positive behaviour, for example, display pictures showing “walking feet” or “quiet voices.” These reminders help children understand and follow expectations.

Effective Practice

The **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** sets standards for the learning, development, and care of children from birth to 5 years old. Whether children receive education and care from multiple settings or a single one, practitioners play a crucial role in ensuring effective continuity and progression.

When considering transitions throughout the day, it is important that we consider that children may transition:

- From home to the setting
- From the setting to home
- From another setting to the setting
- From the setting to another setting

In order to support children with these transitions, here are some elements to consider:

Communication and Information Sharing

Practitioners should maintain open lines of communication with each other, parents, and carers. Encourage parents and carers to share their child's experiences and activities from home and other settings. Recording daily key experiences at home and in various settings ensures continuity of learning and care.

Consider using a communication system such as an app or travel diary that includes information on important events, the child's feelings, and how carers have supported them. This could also feature photographs, creating a pictorial record to help the child make sense of their week. Practitioners and parents can add their observations and comments.

The Role of the Key Person

The key person acts as a vital link between home and the setting. They develop close relationships with the child and their families, collating important information about the child and ensure that others (such as additional key workers) have the necessary details about the child.



Individual Plans

Parents and carers, along with the key person in the setting, can create an individual plan. This written record captures essential information about the child's needs, preferences, and any specific requirements.

The plan can be passed on to different practitioners, ensuring consistency and informed care. Regular updates are essential as the child's needs evolve.

Stay Informed About Important Events

Regardless of who brings or collects the child, it's crucial to be aware of significant events that may affect them. Consider implementing a system where parents or carers can write notes to key persons.

Celebrate children's achievements through this, encourage parents and carers to write about their child's accomplishments. These celebrations and achievements could then be used to create a display, for example hanging written celebration notes on a tree. Achievements could range from learning to ride a bike to receiving a swimming certificate.

SEND

Supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) during times of change is crucial. It is important that settings consider how they support children with SEND as this ensures their well-being, promotes learning, and creates an inclusive environment where every child can thrive.

When supporting transitions throughout the day for children with SEND, settings may consider:

Visual Timetable

Create a visual timetable for the day's activities. This helps all children, including those with SEND, understand their routines. Visual cues can be especially helpful for children who benefit from visual learning.

Key Person Support

Designate a key person who will support the child during changes throughout the day. This consistent point of contact can provide reassurance and guidance.

Effective Communication

Ensure that information about the child's experiences is effectively communicated. Use various methods such as photos, homemade books, examples of work, and recording devices to share relevant information with parents and carers.

Promote Independence

Leverage the skills of support staff to help the child become more independent. Encourage building relationships with other children and learning new skills.



Predictability and Reassurance

Help the child understand what will happen next. Predictability provides comfort, especially for children with SEND. Reassure them that they are safe and that their needs will be met.

Photo Book

Create a photo book featuring adults the child will interact with during the day. This can be kept in the setting and shared with parents and carers, allowing them to become familiar with the faces and names.

Clear Roles and Responsibilities

Establish clear roles and responsibilities for staff, including Learning Support Assistants. Clarity ensures effective collaboration and consistent support.

Please note: For child-specific transition guidance for children with SEND, advice should be sought from the child's Specialist IDS teacher, who can support in creating a personalised support plan which is effective and tailored, to that child's need.

EAL

Supporting children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) during transitions throughout the day is crucial for their development and well-being.

Children with EAL may need more time to settle into new environments and routines. Transitions throughout the day can cause anxiety for these children, and we take time to support children with EAL during these times.

When considering supporting children with EAL with transitions throughout the day, you may consider:

Visual Support

Visual supports can be used with children with EAL to bridge language gaps and create an inclusive environment. Strategies such as a visual timetable can be displayed in the room to show the sequence of activities throughout the day. EAL children can refer to it to understand what comes next, reducing anxiety and promoting a sense of routine.

Building Relationships

To support children with EAL with transitions throughout the day, we need to build strong relationships with children and their families. Often parents and carers are willing to share their cultural experiences, this is particularly true if you have built up a good relationship over time.



Communication with Families

Establish effective communication methods with families of children with EAL and communicate with them regarding their child's day. Photos of resources and activities used during the session can be shared and displayed for parents to see to support with this. Have a special place to keep models, photocopies, photos to share with parents and celebrate their child's achievement. Invite parents and carers to come and have a look at what the children have been doing.

Learn and use key phrases in children home language – use these to support routines and boundaries such yes / no & please / thank you and instructions - snack home time story time toileting

Develop an enabling environment - that is reflective of children's interests and culture and creates a children's sense of belonging. It is important that children have somewhere to place their belongings, pursue their interest with things representative of their lived experiences.

Remember, supporting children with EAL during transitions throughout the day helps them feel safe, learn effectively, and adapt to their new environment. It's a collaborative partnership, involving settings, families, and other caregivers.