


Supporting Transition to a New Setting.

Top Tips

Transitioning to a new setting is a significant milestone for children.

Here are some top tips to facilitate a successful transition:

- ✓ **Visit the Child in Their Current Setting:** Arrange visits to the child's current environment, whether it's their home or nursery setting. Familiarity with the surroundings can ease the transition.
- ✓ **Gradual Exposure to the New Setting:** Provide opportunities for short, relaxed visits to the new setting, gradually increase the duration to help the child adapt.
- ✓ **Create a Home Book:** Develop a home book specifically for the child to keep at the new setting. Include familiar pictures, family members, and favourite activities.
- ✓ **Positive Memories:** Capture positive memories during visits to the new setting. A photograph or a special moment can create a positive association.
- ✓ **Welcome Booklet for Parents or Carers:** Prepare a welcome booklet for parents or carers to share with the child. It can introduce the new environment, routines, and key information.
- ✓ **Connect with Relevant Professionals:** Provide links to health visitors, social care professionals, and specialists (such as English as an Additional Language or SEN specialists) who can support the child's needs.
- ✓ **Share Information from Previous Settings:** Gather insights from previous settings. Understanding the child's history and preferences is invaluable for a successful transition.
- ✓ **Develop Ongoing Links:** Establish connections with feeder settings (e.g., preschools, nurseries). Collaboration ensures continuity and a smoother transition.
- ✓ **Flexible and Reflective Approach:** Be adaptable. Start from where the child is comfortable and build upon their interests and enjoyment.

 **Remember, a supportive and empathetic approach is essential during this transition period.**



This section of the pack has been written to support you with considering the child's needs as they transfer to new settings. It is crucial that we carefully plan and support children and their families as they are welcomed into a new setting.

For a smooth transition, it's essential that children feel secure, comfortable, and successful with change being introduced gradually. It is therefore important that settings prepare to receive children, as well as supporting our current children ready to move to a new setting.

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

"'Receiving' educators need to get to know the setting(s) from which new children came and as much about the children prior to transfer as possible."

Julie Fisher, Early Education, Autumn 2006

Home to Setting

Building strong relationships with parents is crucial for ensuring a smooth transition for children. When parents feel involved, informed, and supported, it positively impacts the child's experience.

You may choose to consider the following in your transition planning:

Home Visits

Home visits play a crucial role in easing the transition for children as they move to a new setting, and have many benefits for the child, family, and setting, including:

- **Familiarity and Security:** Home visits allow the child to meet an adult from the new setting in a familiar environment—their own home. This familiarity helps reduce anxiety and provides a sense of security for the child.
- **Building Relationships:** During the home visit, the child can begin forming a connection with the key person or teacher who will be part of their new setting. It's an opportunity for the child to feel known and recognised.
- **Informal Context:** Parents can ask questions and discuss any concerns in a relaxed and informal context.
- **Parental Involvement:** Home visits involve parents directly. They become active participants in the transition process and can share insights about their child's routines, likes, and dislikes.



Visits to the New Setting

Encourage children to make visits to the new setting, initially accompanied by their parents. During these visits, explain practical details such as the location of toilets, where to hang coats, and where to get a drink or snack. Observe what the child enjoys playing with and ensure those resources are available during following visits.

Collaborate with Outside Agencies

If a child receives support from other professionals, seek permission from parents to work closely with these agencies. Ensure that strategies and necessary support are in place before the child starts at the new setting.

Settling-In Plan

As part of the induction process, the key person should observe the child during visits and collaborate with parents to create a settling-in plan. Review the plan after the first few weeks and share feedback with parents, being flexible and adjusting the plan when needed.

Parent Feedback

Actively seek input from parents and carers, through informal conversations or questionnaires, about their experiences during the transition from home to the setting to understand their perspective. Staff meetings can then be used to review and improve transition arrangements based on this feedback.

Remember, a collaborative approach involving staff, parents, and agencies contributes to a positive and successful transition experience for children.

Setting to Setting

Developing strong links between different educational settings is crucial for enriching each child's learning journey and supporting them to transition to a new setting.

It is important that we work collaboratively with other settings to support this process, here are some ways which you may consider working with other settings to support transition.

Previous Experiences

Understand the child's prior experiences. Gather information about what the child knows, their interests, and their abilities. This knowledge will help you build upon their existing foundation.

Contact Current Setting

Reach out to the child's current educational setting. By speaking with practitioners, teachers, or caregivers, you can gain insights into the child's unique qualities and needs.

Aspiration Network Meetings

Participate in support group meetings. These gatherings provide an opportunity to connect with other professionals and share informal information about the child. Collaboration enhances the child's overall experience.

Visit other Settings

If feasible, observe the child in a familiar environment. If direct observation isn't possible, engage in phone conversations with other settings. This way, you can gather more information beyond what's documented in the child's learning records.

Planning for a Positive Start

Armed with comprehensive information about the child, you can strategically plan for their positive experience when starting school or a new setting.

Outside Agencies

If an outside agency is involved with the child, consider making contact. Collaborating with external support can enhance the child's transition to school or a new setting.



Remember that good links between the known setting, the family, and the new setting provide a connecting framework that supports a child's acceptance and joy in moving on to new experiences.



Starting School

When considering starting school, it is important to remember that this may well be one of the biggest challenges that the child has ever faced. It is therefore essential that we provide as much support and guidance to that child as possible.

Here are some elements which you may consider when supporting a child to begin their school journey.

Ongoing Transition

View starting a new school as an ongoing part of your practice, which does not begin or end just in September. Consider when in the school year, you begin the transition support for children entering your school in Reception. As the child enters Reception, throughout the school year, continuously engage with children, parents, and carers to ensure a seamless transition. Regular communication and support are essential.

Allow Time for Adjustment

Begin preparing children as early as possible. Familiarise them with their new surroundings, routines, and peers. Give them time to adjust and become comfortable in their new school environment. Children are unique and individual, and we need to consider children's individual needs when planning transition to school.

Visit Pre-School or Other Settings

If possible, visit the child's current pre-school or other educational settings. During this time:

- Observe the environment.
- Take note of resources and role-play activities.
- Note songs used and key routines.

Replicate familiar elements in your classroom to create a sense of continuity.

Attachment and Comfort

Recognise that attachment is fundamental to children's well-being. Encourage the use of special toys, beloved books, personal stories, and photographs. These familiar items provide comfort during the early days of adjustment.



Provide Visual Resources

Creating and sharing resources such as a video or picture book, for new parents, carers, and children that showcases what life is like in your class. You may consider including:

- Highlights of the daily routines
- Activities and resources
- The welcoming classroom environment.
- Other areas of the school they may experience, such as the school office, the lunch hall, the toilets, and the playground.
- Staff which will be supporting them, including wider staff members such as Midday Assistants, Office Staff and SLT.

Providing this visual introduction can ease anxiety and build familiarity.

Provide Opportunities for Children to Visit

Consider opportunities for children to visit the school before they begin. This may initially be with their parents and carers, and then short, settling in sessions may take place for the child to explore the classroom and meet staff and peers.

Capture Memories with Photos

Take photos of the children during their visit to school. These snapshots can serve as cherished memories and reminders of their school experience. Consider giving these photos to the child to keep over the summer break.

Building Relationships

Whether during a visit to their current setting, them visiting you or during home visits, take time to build relationships with children entering your school through observing the children and sensitively joining in with their play.

Consider, how relationships with parents and families can be formed, as strong, respectful relationships between parents and practitioners are crucial. Engage in genuine conversations with parents to share information and extend educational experiences within the setting.

Visual Timetables

The initial days at school can feel long and overwhelming. Ensure that your visual timetable is well-prepared. Visual schedules help children understand the daily routine, anticipate activities, and feel more secure.

A Buddy System

Consider implementing a buddy system. Pair an older child with a younger one to provide support during this crucial time. The older child can help the younger child navigate their new environment, answer questions, and offer friendship.

Advent Calendar Countdown

How about creating an “advent calendar” for the school days? Each day leading up to the official start can reveal a small surprise—a fun activity, a friendly face, or a positive message. This countdown adds excitement and eases the transition.



Curriculum

Carefully consider how your curriculum supports children to transition to your school. By having an effective transition process, this will support you to understand child's current starting points and plan an effective curriculum which builds upon these. Consider children's individual interests and how these can inspire and build on the curriculum.

Parents can become anxious about what is expected of their child, so try to share information with parents, including what is expected of their child, before they begin in September, so they know what to expect. You may choose to offer additional workshops, resources and stay and play sessions to support parents in understanding areas of learning and to give them strategies and ideas of how they can support their child's learning at home.

Remember, each child's experience is unique, so adapt these strategies to meet individual needs. By providing a supportive and nurturing environment, you can help children thrive during this exciting transition to school! 📅 📁 🌟

SEND

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and their families will require more support when they start school or a new setting.

Outlined are some things you may like to consider when supporting children with SEND to move to a new setting.

Multi-Agency Meetings

Attend multi-agency meetings to gain information about key workers who are familiar with the child. Collaborate with professionals from various disciplines to ensure a holistic understanding of the child's needs.

Advance Planning

Plan well in advance for any necessary adaptations, specialised equipment, or staff training. Be proactive in addressing individual needs to create an inclusive environment.

Information Sharing

Gather all relevant information about the child and share it with the new adults who will be involved in their education. Effective communication ensures continuity and tailored support.

Replicate Successful Strategies

If certain strategies have worked well in other settings, consider replicating them. Consistency in equipment, activities, and approaches helps the child feel familiar and supported.

Flexibility

Recognise that some children and their families may require more pre-start visits or additional support. Be flexible and responsive to their unique needs.

Understand Prior Experience

Acknowledge that each child brings a wealth of prior experience. Build upon their existing knowledge and skills to facilitate a positive transition.

Home Visits

Home visits play a vital role in building strong relationships with parents. These visits foster trust, understanding, and collaboration.



Remember, every child is unique, and personalized support is essential. These strategies can contribute to creating a positive and inclusive environment for children with SEND



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

When considering the transition process to a new setting, children with English as an Additional Language may require additional support in order to transition to a new setting.

When supporting children with EAL, you may consider the following points.

Allow Adequate Settling-In Time

Recognise that children with EAL may need more time to settle into the new setting. Be patient and flexible with individual children, recognising that children are individual and may need individual transition plans to support.

Communication with Families

Share information about the setting and routines with parents. Invite them into the setting to support them to become familiar with the learning environment and ask any questions they may have. You may consider using resources in the child's home language to support this, such as translating key documents, such as the settings information pack and a photo book of the setting.

Familiarity and Consistency

Through having communicated with the child's current setting, and family, develop an understand of their current routines, interests and create a sense of familiarity for individual children by incorporating music, songs, and stories that children experience at home into the setting.



Learning Environment

When creating a supportive learning environment to welcome children with EAL into their new setting, you may consider:

- A visual timetable
- Feelings or emotions picture cards so children can label their own and others' emotions.
- Photographs of areas, resources, peers, and staff to support children to plan their session with an adult.
- Story and song props used as often as possible.
- Phonetically spelt key words in home languages to help you.
- Placing familiar items which reflect the child's community and culture in your learning environment, such in the home corner.



Remember, every child is unique, and personalised support ensures a smoother transition into the school environment.

