Supporting Transition within a Setting

Top Tips

Transitioning to a new learning environment is a significant step for children and one which both planning, and preparation are key components.

Here are some top tips to facilitate a successful transition:

- ✓ **Explore and Visit**: Provide children with opportunities to explore and visit their new learning environment regularly. Gaining a sense of familiarity helps ease the transition.
- ✓ **Engage with New Practitioners**: Provide opportunities for new practitioners to engage with the child. Building positive relationships is essential during this transition.
- ✓ **Build on Previous Environments**: Create a learning environment that builds on the child's previous experiences and individual needs.
- ✓ **Share Information**: Plan time for present and new key persons to share knowledge about the child, including any Special Educational Needs, cultural, and linguistic requirements.
- ✓ **Communicate with Parents**: Keep parents informed about the next steps and the changes that will occur. Open communication is crucial in supporting effective transitions.
- ✓ **Introduce Key Persons and Environment**: Organise an open session for children, parents, and carers so they can meet their new key person and see the environment where they will play and learn.
- ✓ **Review Settling Process**: Take time to review how the child has settled into the new environment.
- ✓ **Evaluate Transition Process**: Reflect on the transition process and consider the implications for future transitions.
- ✓ **Consider Friendship Groups**: During this time, introduce children to each other and take friendship groups into account.

Remember, patience and understanding are essential as children adapt to change.

Children's experience of room-to-room transitions can be positive when they are planned for appropriately by the key people in their lives. Providing continuity of care and ensuring a secure base for children can support children to predict and cope with change. Actively involving the child, parents and key educators in the process will encourage a smooth transition.

When the process focuses on continuity of experience for the child between the different environments, this will lead to a smooth transition, allowing both child and family to transition between these worlds in a positive manner.

Transitions or changes for children that are planned for and managed well lead to successful outcomes for the child and the adults in their life.

This section of the tool kit has been created to support early years providers in considering the needs of children as they move into a new room new group or class with a setting or school.

"Good transition doesn't wait till the Summer term, it starts much earlier, with informal contacts and visits, events, letters, displays, and information exchanges."

Ros Bayley, Smooth Transitions

New Rooms and New Routines

For us as adults moving rooms even within the same setting may seem like a small change, but for many of our children this is a significant change, and it can often have huge impact upon their wellbeing learning and development child.

To foster successful transitions the following key points which may be helpful to consider.

Clear and robust transition systems

Developing a transition policy or procedures and systems that include how room to room transitions are managed can help to ensure continuity for children and also ensure that everyone involved has a clear understanding of their role in facilitating a smooth transition for each child.

It's important that these policies and procedures for room-to-room transitions are shared with both staff and parents and their effectiveness is reviewed regularly.

Share key information.

Before a child moves into the next room, the childs key person should create a summary of information about the child, this will be informed by their knowledge of whole the child, ongoing observations, and information which has been shared by parents and by the child. This summary of key information should be shared with the next key person and used to create a settling-in plan for the next stage of the child's learning journey. All about Me sheets or a summary of the childs Favourite things can prove to be helpful tools in providing quick and easily accessible forms of key information as children move from room to room.

When a child has moved into a new room it is good practise to provide opportunities for staff to discuss the information they have received about them and discuss how well they have settled in.

Utilise the child's Key Person:

A child's key person plays a vital role supporting and preparing a child for the transition process. So where possible allow children to visit their new room or setting with their existing key person so they can spend time exploring the new environment together.

The childs key person can also use stories with a child to help them explore the new situations that they may experience when they move. Stories, particularly open-ended ones, can empower a child to reason and problem solve independently.

Spend time building new relationships.

Where a child will be allocated a new key person, this member of staff could visit the child's current room. This allows the child time to become familiar with their new key person in an environment which is familiar to them and where they feel comfortable. From here visits can be arranged for the child to visit their new room. Sometimes a child may need a number of visits.

Establish a buddy sytem

Involving a sibling or friend can assist a child with transition. This peer support can be especially effective for less secure children who will observe and often follow the lead of their more confident peers.

Provide comfort items or transitional objects.

Having the secutity of an object that a child is familiar with such as a blanket or soft toy can provide children with emotional comfort during times of transition.

Use visuals to support the process:

Display visuals such as the the childs new key person and photos of the new room with a picture of the child attached to it in the childs existing room. The child existing key person can then make reference to this during conversations and these conversations will help to develop a sense of familiarity.

Create and use a transition box or bag

Using items the child enjoys playing with in their previous room such as jigsaws, books small word resources, allow the children to play with this in their new room. This familarity will help them feel more settled

Develop a family wall

Within each room staff could display photos of the childs families and special things from home. Throughout the day children can add their own drawing, special creations and photos to these walls to share with their families at home time.

Involve parents:

It is important to provide opportunities for the parent and new and previous key persons to meet to plan for the child's transition. Make parents aware of when the transition will commence so that they can provide support and talk to their child about the transition. This can reduce anxiety greatly for them and for their children.

Setting may also involve parents in the process of room to room transitions by inviting them to an informal meeting, so they can see the new enviroment and meet other staff who will be working in the room. This will provides parents with opportunities to learn about any new routines and the experiences their child will encounter. It can also be helpful to send a leaflet home to parents which reminds them of the key points dicussed and also provides information to parents who can't attend.

Have an open door policy

Where possible setting should conider having and open door policy for parents to come and visit and speak to staff. This helps to build strong partnerships and allievate any worries parents hold.

Encouarge links with home: Where possible setting should consider hosting regular story time or stay and play sessions where parents and extended families can join their child in their play and learning.

Other considerations:

- Provide children with frequent opportunities to explore other rooms through the year. Settings may faciliate this through planning activities, special days, or simply through holding story times in other rooms in your setting.
- Provide regular play opportunities for older and younger children to play together throughout the year.

Through spending time in other rooms children will become more familar with the environments, routines and get to know other children better too before any transitions occur.

All About Me sheets or a summary of a child's favourite things and interests can provide a helpful overview of key information, which can then be shared with the next key person.

Remember having quick and easy access to key information is vital as children move from room to room and class to class.

When children move from one part of their educational journey to another—whether joining a new setting, moving within a setting, or starting school—providing familiar routine, familiar play resources, a similar learning environment can make a significant difference.

Moving from Reception to Year 1

Transitioning from Reception to Year 1 can indeed be a significant adjustment for young learners and can impact upon progress and wellbeing.

Adopting a thoughtful and supportive approach during this transition can make a world of difference for both children and parents.

Adults working alongside children can also help this transition to be smooth and seamless through planning key activities to take place before, during and after this transition to ensure that practise and provision meets the needs of all children.

Exploring new classrooms

Consider swapping class bases early in the summer term, this could be just for a story time or a short activity and later in the term it could be for a morning or afternoon. This will allow children to explore their new learning environment and develop a sense of familiarity with it, which may mean they adjust more comfortably to the change.

Establish consistent routines

Encourage all staff members to adopt similar daily routines, this can provide a sense of predictability for children and help to ease their adjustment to new situations.

Teacher Swap

If you're away for the day, consider inviting the Year 1 Teacher take the class. This provides opportunities for children to get to know their new teacher in their own environment and helps to ensure their face becomes more familiar.

Meet Your New Teacher Session

Provide parents with an opportunity to meet the new teacher and ask any questions, through organising a brief meeting or drop-in session after school. This can also help to develop home and school partnerships.

As part of this meeting, parents could also be invited to share any worries or questions they may have in a worry box. After the meeting these can then be addressed as part of an open evening or included within an information booklet for parents and carers.

Identifying needs

Reception staff should identify children who are at risk of having transition difficulties as early as possible. A transition meeting early in the term should be arranged and knowledge should be shared about children's individual needs by the parents and any other agencies if they are involved. Plans should be made within the year 1 classroom to ensure provision is in place to meet these needs.

Tailor the Curriculum

Use the information shared by the previous teacher and the EYFS profile assessment data to design the curriculum around children's strengths and developmental needs. When planning your curriculum consider ways in which:

- Meaningful, play-based learning experiences can be provided through sand, water construction, outdoor play and role play through meaningful contexts.
- Active independent learning opportunities can be promoted.

Supporting Children with SEND

Transition within a setting can be an anxious time for a child and their family, particularly if there are additional needs with regard to a child speech, language, and communication, their health and physical needs or their general development.

Periods of change can be made less daunting if parents,' carers and children's views are both valued and respected and if they are fully involved in the transition process.

Careful planning, preparation, flexibilty and partnership working with parents, staff and other professionals are also key components which will help to ensure a smooth transition.

Training and Confidence

If a child has a particular need, try to ensure that staff have accessed appropriate training and where possible worked alongside the child's existing key person before the child moves into their new room. This will help staff to feel more confident in meeting the child's unique needs.

Open Communication

Before a child moves into a new room provide lots of opportunities for staff, the SENDCO, other professionals and parents to meet to discuss the child's individual needs. These meetings should take place well in advance so that information relating to individual support plans, health care plans and speech and language targets can be shared. This will help to ensure a seamless transition and prevent gaps in provision and practise from occurring.

Create, share and implement transition plans
The child key person, settings SENDCO, new staff and parents should work together to plan an outline of transitional activities and measures to support the child and agree a timescales for these to take place. Once imeplemented these transition plans should be regularly reviewed and adapted according to the needs of the child.

Other transition considerations to support children with additional needs may include:

Additional planned visits
It is important to recognise that some children with additional needs who are moving rooms or meeting unfamiliar adults may need more visits and time to adjust. To help with this, staff can plan and provide additional opportunities for children to get to know their new environment and the people around them and adopt a more gradual process where settling in is built up over a period of time.

Transitional objects and resources
Using objects such as child's favourite toy, blanket or storybook can provide a sense of security during transitions. Photo books of family members can also be helpful in creating a sense of belonging and familiarity for a child in their new environment.

Visual timetables, social stories, and transition books
These can play a key role in preparing a child for the transitions which lie ahead through introducing new staff, the new environment and new routines**.** Copies of these can also be sent home for parents to share with their child.

Build up new relationships over time
Building a warm and a secure relationship with a new key person is crucial for any child and especially those with additional needs. Where possible staff working in the room the child is transitioning to, should spend time getting to get to know the child in their existing environment. This will also provide staff with opportunities to observe how existing practise, and provision supports the child's individual needs.

Create an enabling and inclusive environment
Ensure new staff are aware of childrens individual needs and preferences and put measures in place to support these. These careful considerations can really help children to feel settled in their enviroments.

Things for staff to consider may include:

- Adpating the environment to ensure it meets the needs of individual children.
- Reflecting upon the curriculum provided and adopting a flexible approach which ensures that the curriculum experiences provided are both inclusive and tailored to the needs of each individual child.
- Being aware of a childs sensitivities to noise, sound, lighting, smell, taste or touch and preferred methods of comfort and altering the aesthics of the enviroment to reduce visual stimulus and sensory overload.

Take a child centred approach

- Being aware the little things such as a favourite cup, toy or comfort items a child may use, and ensuring these are available.
- Being familiar with any visual systems a child uses such as visual timetables, widget cards and now and next boards and ensuring these are readily available and used consistenly.
- Understanding any specific signs and gestures a child may use for communication and ensuring these are used.

🌟 Remember, flexibility, empathy, and proactive planning contribute to a supportive and enriching experience for children with SEN.

Supporting Children with EAL

Supporting children with English as an Additional Language during times of transition is crucial for their well-being and successful integration.

Before a child moves into a new room staff should spend time observing them in their familiar environment. The information gained through observations of their interactions with friends and their confidence in using their home language with peers and adults can then be used to support them as they transition to the next room.

Embrace and value diversity

Work together as as a team to create an ethos and clear vision within your setting that not only embraces and celebrates diversity but also ensures all children feel valued, respected, and have equal access to resources.

Taking an Individual approach

Staff need to be knowledgeable about each child's ethnicity, language and dialect, community, and locality so that they are able to offer them familiar sights, sounds and experiences that will help them settle. In order to do this staff, need to spend time talking to parents about their childs experiences at home and in the setting. Actively listen and consider ways in which ideas and information they share with you can be used to create a settling in plan which supports transition.

For children who may feel vulnerable during transitions, continuity in routines is essential as is a familiar warm and welcoming environment.

Puppets and persona dolls can also support children when they are feeling anxious or their key person is unavailable. Alternatively settings may consider adopting buddy key person system.

Create an welcoming environment

- Provide resources within each area such as clothing, cooking utensils, music, books, artwork, and positive images that reflect childrens cultural background.
- Use displays, photos and captions to reflect the cultural diversity and home languages which exist within your setting.
- Consider the ways in which dual language books can be used at story times and be made available in all areas of your provision. You may also consider loaning dual language books from your local library if bugets are limited.

Develop Parent Parnerships

- Share your settings values with parents and carers so they understand how culture and diversity is embedded in your setting and used to support their child's development.
- Invite parents and carers to come and read stories in their home language or join you in celebrating their special festivals. These opportunities will help to support transitions and also provide children with first hand experiences to learn about other languages and cultures.

🌟 Remember that supporting EAL children involves creating an inclusive environment that values diversity and promotes effective communication across languages and cultures.

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