

Transition: Guide for Practitioners

Transition is a time of change and can be a source of both excitement and anxiety for children and for parents. Throughout the transition process, young children need to feel secure and confident that their needs, wants, likes and dislikes will be understood. Young children are dependent on the adults around them to share this important information.

Being an Early Years provider that strives for inclusion of all children, brings a lot of benefits to the child as well as the Early Years Provision.

Benefits of being an inclusive setting include:

- ▶ extending and developing staff knowledge and skills.
- ▶ upskilling staff through training.
- ▶ the opportunity to learn about other organisations such as NPA, CDC etc.
- ▶ positive effect on reputation of the provider.
- ▶ opportunities to liaise with a specialist provision.
- ▶ increase ethos of provider within the local community.
- ▶ offering education to all children within their community.

If the child is known to have additional needs prior to them starting at an Early Years provision, it is likely that the child has professionals involved. One of those professionals may be a Portage practitioner or an advisor from the Early Years SEND team. They will act as the 'Lead Professional' to support transition, by supporting that vital link between provision and home.

Moving from home to a pre-school, nursery or childminder setting is an exciting and important stage for a child and family. A successful transition means that children settle quickly and easily. Parents/carers should be involved at all stages of the process as they know their child best. Working closely together and being positive about this experience will help children settle into their new environment.

Key Government guidance/legislation

SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)

– The SEND CoP is a legal document that all providers must adhere to. Amongst many points, the SEND CoP discusses the need for all providers to promote equality and inclusion for children with disabilities or SEN, which includes removing all barriers that prevent children accessing early education and providing support for the child to reach their full potential. SEND support should also include planning and preparing for transition.

The Equality Act (2010) – The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. This includes both children and families wanting to access your provision, with 'disability' and 'use of education' as specific points of the Act. This means you cannot limit access to your provision through direct or indirect discrimination. It also clearly states that all providers must make pre-emptive reasonable adjustments to ensure children are not at a disadvantage.



Establishing relationships

- ▶ Ensure your SEND report is up to date on the Family Information Directory. Parents and carers often form their initial impression of your setting using this report.
- ▶ Produce a setting brochure that includes photographs of your provision and your setting's approach to teaching and learning including the daily routines. FAQs and key contact information is also important to include.
- ▶ Welcome families into your setting
- ▶ Listening and valuing parents' views is vital. They know their own children the best and can often provide a useful insight.
- ▶ For children with additional needs, take time to find out about what support is needed to ensure they are included and ask permission to contact other professionals. Ask for copies of reports from other professionals.
- ▶ Ensure that once the child has started, the key person is available at handover times to talk to parent/carers about events of the day.
- ▶ Ensure key members of staff "meet and greet" children and their families and are available as a point of contact.
- ▶ Before the child starts, encourage parents and carers to complete an "All about me" booklet. This is great way to find out about a child's interests.
- ▶ It is vitally important to start from the viewpoint of what the child can do and not what they can't do. Building relationships with both the child and family is key and can be achieved through a successful transition.

Visits to the setting

- ▶ Talk to parents and offer them a home visit. Parents and children will feel more relaxed, and it will give practitioners valuable information about the child's lived experience.
- ▶ Encourage parents/carers to visit with their child. Some children will need several visits and will benefit from visiting at different times of the day.
- ▶ Discuss settling in sessions and opportunities for parents and carers to stay or make available a room they can sit in for a short time.

Sharing information about new children

- ▶ Collect detailed information about the child's strengths and interests, medical information and capture parent/carers views on their child's development.
- ▶ Sensitively find out about a child's culture, religion and languages spoken at home
- ▶ Ask about their family and key people involved in the child's care.
- ▶ Enquire if the child has attended a setting before or if they will be attending more than one setting. Ask how they settled into any previous settings.



Preparation for the setting

- ▶ The information gathered during the induction period can give the setting a good picture of what they may need to do to prepare for the child starting.
- ▶ Consider the physical changes to the layout or location of particular activities, to enable all children equal access and learning opportunities.
- ▶ Audit toys, books and other resources to ensure they are suitable and accessible for the child.
- ▶ Plan activities that build on the interests of the child.
- ▶ Display photographs of staff members on parent boards so parents know who's who.
- ▶ Familiar books, pictures, comforters or other objects can help to provide continuity of experience between home and setting.
- ▶ Have in place any specialist equipment the child may need, plan ahead as this may take time to source through health pathways.
- ▶ If there is a specialist advisor/practitioner involved, they can act as a lead professional and a link between provision and parent/carers.
- ▶ Holding a professional meeting prior to the child starting can often give you key information that might otherwise have been missed.
- ▶ Maintaining contact with professionals once the child is in the setting is important. They can advise on effective ways to support the child.
- ▶ Does the family receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA)? If so, Disability Access Funding (DAF) can be applied for. This is often used to support adaptations or new equipment in settings.



Training and support

- ▶ Staff need time to become familiar with the information given about the child.
- ▶ Managers and leaders of settings should arrange regular supervisions with practitioners, giving guidance to develop supportive, professional relationships with parents and carers.
- ▶ Ensure appropriate training for medical needs has been completed and health care plans are in place (where necessary).

Settling in and follow up

- ▶ Put together a plan to address any barriers before the child starts.
- ▶ Use home/setting books or online platforms to keep in touch with parents/carers about how their child is settling in.
- ▶ Settings should continue to work in partnership with parents and carers and adopt a flexible approach.



Top tips to help a successful transition

- ▶ Ensure that your SEND report is available and update your prospectus to ensure families can access information to reassure them that you can meet their child's needs.
- ▶ Gather as much information as possible about the child. Use admission forms and All About me booklets.
- ▶ Talk to parents and plan a home visit for relevant staff.
- ▶ Arrange a transition meeting with parents and any professionals involved before the child starts.
- ▶ Think about who would be a suitable key person. Support and create opportunities for them and the SENCO (if appropriate) to build a relationship with the child and parents.
- ▶ Ensure staff receive any training that may be needed before the child starts at the setting.
- ▶ Ensure specialist equipment is in place before the child starts.
- ▶ Audit toys, books and other resources to ensure they are suitable and accessible for the child.
- ▶ Consider any necessary reasonable adjustments to be made eg the room layout, the provision of a quiet area, toilet adaptations, changes to lighting, flooring or furniture.
- ▶ Agree a start date and settling in plan with parents/carers.

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