



New Setting

Top Tips

- ✓ Offer familiar environments and routines.
- ✓ Visit the child in their current setting – this could be at home and/or day care.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for the child to visit their new setting in managed short relaxed bursts.
- ✓ Make a home book for the child to keep at the new setting.
- ✓ Provide a positive memory of their visit to the setting – like a photograph.
- ✓ Make a welcome booklet for the parent or carer to share with the child.
- ✓ Provide links to other relevant professionals such as health visitors, social care or English as an Additional Language (EAL) and SEN specialists.
- ✓ Try to share information from previous settings – this will be invaluable.
- ✓ Develop ongoing links with feeder settings.
- ✓ Offer a flexible and reflective approach that allows you to start from where the child is and what they enjoy.

This section of the pack has been written to support you with considering the child's needs as they transfer to new settings. The way in which children and their families are welcomed into a setting is crucial.

For a smooth transition, it's essential that children feel secure, comfortable and successful with change being introduced gradually. And it's really important to prepare to receive children, as well as getting your current children ready for transfer.

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

A strong relationship with parents is key to ensuring a smooth transition. Consider these fundamentals in your transition planning:

Home visits

Before children start with you, try to offer a home visit. This will allow the child to become familiar with an adult from the setting in an environment in which they feel secure. It also allows parents to ask questions about the setting in a more informal context.

In practice

“Usually two practitioners from our setting attend a home visit, one to talk to parents and carers, the other to share a puzzle or book about the setting. At the end of a visit, we leave a book for the child about the setting and book for parents explaining routines. We also give parents the opportunity to visit the setting or get in contact before their child starts.”

“After holiday I go to big school. I will like it because Abbie is there”



The settling-in bag can make a child feel secure

Skills for staff

Pass on your skills to new staff through induction meetings. Discuss how they support children as a key person during the transition from home to the setting.

Visits to pre-school

The more confident the child feels before starting at a new setting, the easier s/he will cope with the transition process. Encourage children to make visits, initially with their parents. Ideally time will be spent explaining where the toilets are, where to hang coats and get a drink or snack from. The key person will observe what the child likes to play with and makes sure that they are on offer the next time the child visits.

Work with outside agencies

If a child receives support from other professionals, ask permission from parents to work with agencies to ensure strategies and support are in place before the child starts. This will make sure the first experience is as smooth and positive as possible for all involved.

Settling in plan

As part of the induction process, the key person should try to observe the child during visits and work with parents to write a settling in plan.

After the first few weeks the key person should review how the plan has worked and share this with the parents.

Parent feedback

Try to ask parents and carers how they feel about their experiences of the transition from home to setting. Ask them informally or send out questionnaires to find out information and spend a staff meeting reviewing how you could improve the arrangements for the next time.

“I think I will like it... I keep going to have a look around.”

Starting school

Starting school may be one of the biggest changes that a child has ever faced, so it's really important that we provide as much support and guidance as possible. Keep these points in mind...

Prepare everyone - make a video for new parents, carers and children about what it's like in your class.

Try developing a carer, or **buddy system**, where an older child supports the younger child in their new environment during this crucial time.

Take **photos** of the children during their visit to school. These can be given to the child to keep over the summer to remind them of their school experience.

Make up a **photo book** about your school which can be kept at pre-school or taken home to share with parents, carers and childminders.

Try to **visit the pre-school** or other settings. Take note of the environment, and try to replicate toys, role-play, songs and routines as much as you can.

Give it time. Start preparing children as soon as possible so that they have enough time to become familiar with their new surroundings.

What about the curriculum?

Use the curriculum to minimise the impact of moving to a new setting. CLLD based activities can be a great way to settle children first thing in the morning and responding to a child's individual interests can inspire activities and build on the curriculum.

Parents in particular can become anxious about what is expected of their child so try to share expectations with parents during the induction so that they know what to expect. Offer evening workshops which explain CLLD experiences and tell parents what they can do to support their child's learning.



Take time to support children on their initial visit to school

Transition is a process not an event. Transfer to a new school should be an ongoing part of your practice.

Transition to school should be like a 'fish in water' whereby children will thrive in an environment similar to the one they have left.

Try: asking pre-school for an old display and put it up in the new class room.

Attachment is an underpinning factor in supporting children's well being. Give plenty of opportunities to involve special toys, books, stories, people and photographs especially in the very early days.

The first few days at school can be long, make sure your visual timetable is ready for all the visits and every day in school. How about an advent calendar count down through the day.

“Effective transitions within the Foundation Stage depend largely on a commitment from teams to develop communication links between local setting.”

Jane Drake, Nursery World, June 2005

Setting to setting

Developing strong links between settings will enrich the learning journey for each child.

Try to find out about the previous experiences the child has had so that you can build on what the child knows, is interested in and can do. The more information you can gather the easier it is to plan the transition process.

Try phoning the child's current setting so that you can find out about the unique child.

Foundation Stage Support Group meetings can be a good way to make connections with other groups and share informal information about a child.

School to school

Whatever time of the year a child transfers to school, the anxieties remain the same. So it's good for class teachers to find out as much as possible about the child's individual experiences, routines and interests.

Try to observe the child in a familiar environment. If this isn't possible speak to settings over the phone – so that you discover more than what's included in the child's learning records.

The more information you can gather about the child the easier it is to plan for a positive experience of starting school.

If you know that an outside agency is connected with the child, then it's worthwhile making contact to support the child as fully as possible when s/he starts at school.



Take time to visit children before they start in your setting



Shared experiences with older children will make transition easier

“I’m having a t-shirt and a new bag!”

SEN

Remember, children with Special Educational Needs and their families will require more support when they start school.

- Attend any multi-agency meetings so that you gain information and knowledge of key workers known to the child.
- Plan well in advance for any adaptations, specialist equipment or training for staff needed to meet individual needs.
- Gather together all the information you have and share this with the new range of adults who will become known to the child.
- Try to replicate the strategies that have worked in other settings. Use similar or ideally the same equipment or activities. The child then feels some familiarity and consistency.
- Be flexible, some children and their families need more pre-start visits than others.
- Remember the child brings a wealth of prior experience to your setting for you to build upon.
- Again, home visits are vital in building relationships with parents.



Sharing information will help you to plan a curriculum which meets the child's needs

“The receiving educator needs to observe the learning and teaching styles that children are used to. Achieving seamlessness is so often more about matching the ways in which children learn.”

Julie Fisher, Early Education, Autumn 2006

English as an Additional Language

In practice

“I work in a setting with children who have English as an additional language. I asked for support from the inclusion adviser. The inclusion adviser spent time with the child on their first induction visit. Once the child had settled she phoned then visited them to see how they had settled and ensured the school knew how to contact EMASS for further support.

We always spend time observing the child in their familiar environment, looking at who their friends are and whether they are confident to use their home language with their peers and adults. When we decide on the next class, we use this information to ensure the child is with familiar friends where possible. We encourage children to bring a special object from pre-school to have in their new class for as long as it takes. When children feel confident we take a photo of them playing with the toy and send it back to the pre-school with a special letter from the child.

We use puppets and persona dolls to help children have a point of contact when they are feeling anxious or their key person is unavailable.

We involve parents and carers in completing a settling in plan, but we're aware this may take longer due to communication issues.

During the induction process we always talk to parents to try and alleviate their fears and encourage them to speak to their child in their home language. We explain that once children are confident to speak English they will, and often children go through a period of not saying anything as they are listening to what is being said around them. After using the Communicating Matters materials we realised how important facial expressions, body language and gestures are.



Taking time to talk to parents will alleviate their fears as children start at a new setting

We try to ensure that resources like clothing, cooking utensils, music, dual language books, artwork, stories, positive images reflect the cultural diversity of society and are used throughout the year rather than just festival times!

We ensure that dual language books are accessible and favourites from pre-school are available. We use the local library to borrow dual language books. They are always happy to order copies if they do not have them in stock”.

**Your
CD-ROM
contains useful
tools for you to
use in your setting.**

“I don't know what it will be like.”



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