

Transition

A good practice guide for supporting transitions in the early years

This guide is designed to support all early years practitioners in Reading to prepare children for transition. Transition for the purpose of this document, refers to any changes in provider that a child may experience. Transition is referred to as a process rather than a single event and a high-quality experience depends on early planning and communication, alongside opportunities for developing relationships and familiarity.

A Unique Child

Recognise that all children, can be vulnerable at times of change, particularly children who have additional needs and those who may experience disadvantaged circumstances. It is important that children who are more vulnerable are provided with additional opportunities to help prepare for the changes ahead. Warm, responsive adults who prioritise children's wellbeing and emotional development will help children to feel secure in their new environment.

Positive Relationships

Home visits are a great opportunity to start building relationships with families and to discuss any sensitive topics, support and other agencies working with the family. Local research highlights that early communication which involves families, settings and wider professionals ensures greater opportunity to build relationships and ensure collaboration. Parents say that this helps them feel listened too, reduces their anxiety and ensures that the receiving setting has time to ask questions and act on this information in preparation for their child. Some children will attend more than one setting and for these children it is important that all practitioners work in partnership with families to exchange information.

Enabling Environments

Children cope better with transitions when there are opportunities to gradually become familiar with a setting and when there are consistencies with what they already know. Provide opportunities for the child to experience the new setting first with a family member, then provide repeated opportunities for the child to visit the setting over a period of time. Local research indicated better outcomes for children when they had opportunities to visit their new setting with their family and ideally key person. This was enhanced further when children were also visited by new practitioners in their existing setting.

Learning and development

Each child is unique, and progression will look different for individual children. You may like to complete a summative assessment in collaboration with parents before a child exits your setting to provide an overview of their learning, development, and progress.

An all- year approach to school transition

Transition is a process and working with local partners and communicating with families throughout the year will enhance the approach.

Autumn Term

- If children are attending who chronologically should be in reception find out if they are [deferring or offsetting](#) a school placement.
- Speak to families about the school [admission process](#), find out if they need support to make an application and ensure they are aware of the deadline.
- Sign [EYPP supplementary forms](#) for eligible children and submit to admissions.
- Provide information to families about local school open days and events.
- If a child's needs determine that a specialist placement is **essential** (not would benefit from) ensure that the EY SEND team are aware of the child.
- Share **SEND - frequently asked questions** with families who have a child with SEND.
- Towards the end of term find out about the journey for children who have already transitioned, you may like to use/adapt the [setting questionnaire](#) and [family questionnaire](#). Consider what learning you can use to enhance your offer.

Spring Term

- Provide families with information about making a [late application](#) if required.
- Ensure that appropriate processes are in place for children deferring or offsetting their school place.
- Where transition between settings and schools is frequent get together and discuss how transition can be supported through the curriculum.

Summer Term

- Ensure that appropriate processes are in place for children deferring or offsetting their school place.
- Speak to families to find out their child's placement.
- Arrange a process to discuss transition with families, schools and settings, you may like to use a [one-page profile](#) to capture key information.
- If a child has SEND use the [SEND Passport](#) to support the information sharing process.
- Arrange opportunities for new practitioners to visit the child in their familiar setting and for the child to visit their new environment.
- Use a [school or nursery social story](#) and information provided by the new setting to start to talk to children about the changes ahead.
- Where possible both provide and encourage attendance at informal opportunities for children to visit new settings such as family picnics and events.
- Include photos and any uniform of the new setting within the children's environment.

Children Looked After

All Children Looked After aged 2+ who attend an educational provision are required to have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which records both care planning information as well as educational next steps to support progress. A PEP is drawn up in a meeting including the child, parents, carers, social worker, designated teacher and all relevant professionals. [The Virtual School](#) including the Virtual School Head will provide a vital source of support and advice regarding the education of Children Looked After.

Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

A child's transition from home to a preschool setting or from a setting to school can be an anxious time, particularly if there are additional needs with regard to their development of speech and language and communication, health and physical needs or general development. Periods of change can be less daunting when you work with the family, their views are respected, and they contribute to the transition process.

As preparation for transferring to school a SEND transition meeting for parents with the SENCo at the school and, when appropriate, other professionals supporting the child should be arranged prior to the child starting ([Meeting Template -Early Years SEND Transition Passport](#)). The transition meeting is the start of a collaborative partnership between the family, new setting and an opportunity for specific support to be discussed.

Children may have additional information that needs to be shared such as [SEN Support Plans](#), reports from professionals, medical care plans and adjustments details with copies provided before the child starts at the new setting with parental consent.

A small number of children may have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan when their needs are complex. The plan provides a written record of the specialist provision that must be put in place for the child. More information regarding the EHC plan process can be found on Reading's [local offer webpage](#).

Supporting Documents

A toolkit for supporting transitions can be found within our dedicated early years transitions hub [Under 5s transition to nursery or school - Brighter Futures For Children](#)