

Transition Guide

A good practice guide for all year-round support for transitions in the early years

This guide is designed to support all early year's practitioners in Reading to prepare children and families for transition. Transition for the purpose of this document, refers to any changes that a child may experience within their Early Years education ie. settling in, moving between rooms or provider, change of key person, returning after absence etc. 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 and families 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. Complete a summative assessment in collaboration with parents before a child exits to provide an overview of their learning, development, progress and discuss with their new setting. Reflect on, [Starting-Reception.pdf](#) to support assessments whilst applying an individual approach for neurodivergent children building on success and acknowledging learning differences. For SEND children include relevant tools that have supported assessments such as:

- DFE Early Years SEND assessment - [Help for early years providers : Using the assessment tools](#)
- Early Development journal full version - [Early Years Developmental Journal](#)
- BFFC Early Development Journal quick reference guide - [appendix_c_early_years_developmental_journal_bffc_april_2024.pdf](#) .

All year-round approach to transition

Starting early years provision and transition within setting

Joining your setting

- Upon offering a placement develop a transition plan with the parents to support the child settling into a new environment. Part of this process may include a home visit, viewing the child's 'red book' and/or 2-year integrated review (where relevant) and any other health information.
- For children with complex learning or medical needs complete a Risk Assessment, Health Care Plan and consider if staff training is required prior to start date.
- Identify if any other professionals are currently or previously supporting the family.
- Consider an individual approach with arranging settling in visit timings and structure.
- Ensure Parents/Carers are aware of the setting's policies & procedures
- Completion of [All About Me – Time to Transition pack](#) with parents to understand more about the child's interests and any learning and development needs.
- If a child has attended a provider previously or in the case of sharing provider, request an opportunity to share information with them. This will inform settling in and guide learning and development with a coordinated approach.
- Share information with parents about their child's transition including photos of play areas and staff. Consider using a [Social Story for starting Nursery](#)
- Plan key persons/ supportive teachers around children's sessions of attendance and reflective of early relationships built within settling visits.
- For children with emerging needs and learning differences complete a [one-page profile](#) to capture key information and share with the relevant team to guide support and awareness.
- Make plans for children who require immediate support in setting, contact the Early Years SEND team for further advice and consider if applying for early years inclusion funding is required to support the placement.
- Support Parents/Carers to understand the benefits of and develop a positive approach to regular attendance at the setting.

- Develop a transition plan for individual children as they move rooms. Considerations on appropriate key practitioners, handover discussions, sharing of information and planned visits.
- Share with parents your approach to supporting internal transition through rooms and apply flexibility to family needs and learning differences.
- Plan quality transition opportunities throughout the year that supports internal movement in a setting. This may include shared outdoor experiences, planned activities or events supporting mixed age groupings, and opportunities for siblings to play together.
- Review [All About Me – Time to Transition](#) at regular intervals to respond to children experiences in and out of the setting.
- Apply a child centred approach to planning internal transition, having regard to changes in routines, structure and provision to ensure a positive adjustment.
- For children who are attending more than one provider all settings come together and collaborate with parents regularly to share knowledge. Work jointly on individual plans including a shared approach to supporting children's needs.
- For children who have had extended breaks or periods of absence, review a transition plan with parents to support the child re-settling into the setting, considering any new experiences.
- Build on positive relationships with parents to understand external transitions at home that may impact children: for example, new siblings, moving house or loss of family member. Have a

responsive and therapeutic ethos for providing support and signposting to external services if appropriate.

- Continue to support Parents/Carers to understand the benefits of and develop a positive approach to regular attendance at the setting, working together to minimise barriers to attendance.

An all-year approach to transition

Starting school

Autumn Term

- Speak to families about the school [admission process](#), find out if they need support to make an application and ensure they are aware of and complete by the deadline.
- Offer support ie. workshops for families to complete portal application if required, completion of [EYPP supplementary forms](#) for eligible families, and individualised advice.
- Provide information to families about local school open days and events.
- If children are attending who chronologically should be in reception find out if they are [deferring or offsetting](#) a school placement. If so, plan for how the child's needs will be accommodated.
- Use the [All About Me – Time to Transition pack](#) to plan individual approach to transition throughout the year
- 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.
- Continue to support Parents/Carers to understand the benefits of and develop a positive approach to regular attendance at the setting, working together to minimise barriers to attendance.

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.
- Continue to support Parents/Carers to understand the benefits of and develop a positive approach to regular attendance at the setting, working together to minimise barriers to attendance.

- 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.
- Finalise summative assessment in collaboration with parents ready to share with school.
- Reflect on, [Starting-Reception.pdf](#) to support assessments whilst applying an individual approach for neurodivergent children building on success and acknowledging learning differences.
- If a child has SEND use the [SEND Passport](#) to support the information sharing process and hold a transition meeting with school representative and parents (and any other professional involved with family) using the [Transition meeting agenda and Transition action plan](#).
- Arrange opportunities for teachers from schools to visit the child in their familiar setting and for the child to visit their new environment.
- Use a [school 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.
- Continue to support Parents/Carers to understand the benefits of and develop a positive approach to regular attendance at the setting, working together to minimise barriers to attendance.

Children Looked After

All Children Looked After aged 2 up to 18 years 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 they have any additional health, development and physical needs. Periods of change can be less daunting when you work with the family, their views are respected, and they contribute to the transition process.

Arrange a SEND transition meeting for parents with the SENCo at the school and other professionals supporting the child in preparation of the child starting, you may like to use the suggested [Meeting template](#). 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 to share 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](#).