Supporting children’s transitions across the Early Years Foundation Stage
1. The Key Person

The Key Person

The Early Years Foundation Stage challenges us to ensure each child in a nursery setting or Reception is allocated a Key Person.

Sometimes a ‘Key Person’ is understood to be a person to co-ordinate observations and record-keeping for the child.

Whilst an administrative system like this may be an important part of the way you work in nursery or Reception, it is not the same as a Key Person system.

A Key Person system is not principally about administration and record-keeping.

A Key Person is:

- a named member of staff who has more contact than others with the child
- someone to build relationship with the child and parents
- someone who helps the child become familiar with the provision
- someone who meets children’s individual needs and care needs (e.g. dressing, toileting etc)
- someone who responds sensitively to children’s feelings, ideas and behaviour
- the person who acts as a point of contact with parents.

(Guidance: the Key Person in Reception classes and small nursery settings by Julian Grenier, Peter Elfer, Julia Manning Morton, Dilys Wilson and Katie Dearnley)
What is a Key Person?

A Key Person

- Provides a secure base for their key children to support their exploration away from them
- Develops secure trusting relationships with children and parents
- Is physically and emotionally available to their key children
- Provides eye contact, body language and sensitive voice to let children know they are interested
- Settles new children in gradually, helps them become familiar with the setting and supports their arrival and departure each day
- Meet’s children’s care, learning and development needs
- Responds sensitively to children’s feelings, ideas and behaviour
- Has more contact than others with the child and is a point of contact with parents


A Useful Guide to Support Transitions for Under Two’s

It is important to remember that any transition must be planned. Well planned and thoughtful transitions often have a smoother more beneficial outcome for the baby/toddler and their Parents/Carers.

Remember transitions are very individual, what has worked for one baby/toddler may not be as successful for another.

The Key Person will play an essential role in any transition (see The Key Person card).

A baby/toddler passes through many stages of development and at some point learns that a world exists outside of what it can see; Babies and toddlers have little understanding of time.

A transition into a setting is a process over a few weeks but this may be longer or shorter depending on the baby/toddlers individual needs.

1. A baby/toddler will initially need their primary attachment figure with them for the visits in order for them to feel comfortable enough to explore their environment. It is important to remember that the Parents/Carers will often find this an incredibly stressful time in their lives; they may feel abandoned and unloved by their child as their child begins to form a close bond with another adult. We as practitioners must show extreme sensitivity to Parents/Carers in how they personally manage this transition.

2. The baby/toddler will also need a caring and sensitive Key Person to be assigned to them from the outset. The Key Person will need to become a familiar face to the child and be there to support the Parents/Carers as much as they support the baby/toddler.
1. Have a well thought out settling in policy which is clearly understood by Parents/Carers highlighting the need for a settling in period. This should support parents to understand why a settling in period is vital. The Key Person should be available and approachable to the Parents/Carers.

2. Make a book up with photos of the nursery/Reception; include areas such as the toilet, the dinner hall, the playground, key toys and resources. Include a book all about the Key Person that can be shared and left with the child at the home visit before they start at the setting.

3. Before the child starts at your setting find out from Parents/Carers important information such as - What is the child’s routine? Do they have any patterns to their behaviour? How do they like to be soothed and comforted? How do they show their distress? Do they have a favourite toy? What foods do they like/ dislike? Do they have any separation rituals that you need to respect?

4. Before a child starts include special people in their lives on your family wall or in a small book so that they feel a sense of belonging from the start. Provide ‘cubbies’ in your setting where a child can place personal objects that are meaningful to them. If the child has a comforter respect this and allow them the access they need, when they need it.
Transitions in Out of School Provision

Practitioners in out of school provision have the privilege of supporting children through a range of transitions, not least the transition into the setting. This is likely to come in four ways:

- From a pre-school into a Reception class and an out of school provision in one move for some 4 year olds
- From a Reception class once they have started school
- From school at any age
- From a childminder at any stage

Other transitions may include the transition from an infant to a junior school and from a primary/junior school to secondary school. Transitions are likely to include a walk or journey from the school to the setting.

The reasons that these transitions will be taking place may include changes at home, including the main parent/carer going out to work for the first time. Changes both at home and at school can be very unsettling for children and it is vital that practitioners use all their skills, strategies and expertise to support children through these. There is a lot of good practice going on in settings to support transitions in out of school provision.

This includes:

- The Key Person (see The Key Person card) making home visits (see photocopy materials), particularly for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) age range
- Having an open afternoon/morning so that all new children can attend with parents/carers and see how the after school club/breakfast club/holiday club works
- Having an “all about me” or “my favourites” sheet for the children to complete as part of the registration process. This enables the children to tell you things about themselves before they even arrive in the setting, giving the children a voice in the setting at the outset
- Inviting parents and children to attend at least one session together, free of charge, so that the child has an opportunity to experience the opportunities in the provision with the security of knowing that a parent/carer and Key Person are there to support them. This enables parents to understand the routine of the setting and supports the building of positive relationships
• Some free “taster” sessions for children to attend on their own, starting with a short one and gradually building up to a whole session to develop the child’s security in the setting.

• A buddy for the child when they start, who can be there to help the child in their first few weeks, and be a point of contact who is not an adult.

• Being inclusive by working in partnership with the parents, school and any other agencies to support the child through the transition period, including the trip from school to the setting. For children in the EYFS age range this must include some way of sharing information between the Reception class teacher, the setting and the parents/carers e.g. a contact book. It may also include asking the school to share their planning so that the setting is aware of what the child is doing at school. If the child is buzzing with this when they come out of school the setting is prepared and can develop the interest further.

• Using the information gained from parents and children over the initial transition period to include activities and resources in the planning that will support new children to feel more at home, ensuring that you give both the parents and the child a voice in the setting.

• Creating a positive environment (staff, support, resources, environment) to support the emotional needs of the children and to ensure that each child is acknowledged, individually affirmed and secure in the setting. This might include having photos of the children in the setting displayed so that you can add photos of children new to the setting, ensuring that they feel welcomed, valued and included.

• Regular meetings with the parent/carer, particularly over the first few weeks, to ensure that the child is settling well and that everyone is working together effectively to meet the needs of the child.

Similarly transitions out of the setting are important. Some ways in which practitioners can support this are:

• Inviting back children who have already made the transition to spend some time with the children about to go through the transition.

• Working with the new setting to support transition.

• Listening. This is often the most important part of playwork and it is certainly vital in supporting children through transitions.
Meeting the Needs of Each Unique Child

Inclusive practice is crucial to the aim of delivering improved outcomes for all children and closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and others. For many children the experience of entering a new environment is often overwhelming; this experience is likely to result in some level of anxiety and disorientation. Helping children to cope with new surroundings and supporting them to trust unfamiliar adults who may speak a different language from the one the child hears at home requires sensitive planning.

Practitioners have a duty to plan and meet the needs of children from Black and Ethnic minority backgrounds, including Gypsy Roma, traveller communities, and children and families who are newly arrived in this Country for whom English is an additional language. Other groups of children who are looked after children may well have experienced many changes in their life and will be coping with another change as they settle into another caring environment. Parents/carers and children with learning difficulties or disabilities will need to feel fully included and reassured.

Practitioners need to know their children, families and communities well, by taking steps to build positive relationships. This is paramount for our most vulnerable children, who may be at risk of discrimination and exclusion. Building trust within diverse communities takes time, sensitivity and a reflective approach; all practitioners need to develop specific skills to recognise that a major change is taking place for the child and parent/carer.

Strong leadership will support and enable practitioners to meet the individual needs of the child at this crucial time in their learning journey. Getting it right from the start can have a long term positive impact on the child’s emotional well-being and the relationship between the setting and parents/carers.

Responding to needs:

Children come from different backgrounds; each child’s experiences add up to a unique combination that they carry with them on their learning journey. A significant number of children experience:

- emotional trauma and loss in their home or country of origin
- parent’s who are emotionally stressed, apprehensive, over-protective
- separation from their parents or regular carers
- challenging home conditions
- frequent moves
- health & disability needs
What can I do to make a difference for children?

Supporting Every Child

- Build strong links with carers of looked after children
- acknowledge that any change in a young child’s life will result in strong emotional feelings
- Get to know families well and build on each child’s home culture and family background
- Plan for all transitions by making links with other settings and enabling the child to move with minimal upset
- Extend a warm and respectful welcome to all children and families
- Make available a visual timetable that will help children know what will happen next and supports all children
- Gather personal photos and images that will reflect their own family, culture and community
5. Transition into Reception School Approach

Transition into Reception – A School Approach

Links with pre-schools and nurseries

Finding time for Reception class teachers to visit and liaise with pre-school staff is essential to ensure that continuity is provided. The setting staff hold a wealth of knowledge and information about their children which is key to the children settling quickly and securely into their new school lives.

Best practice includes:

• The Reception class teachers visiting the nursery/preschool to observe and get to know the children and to have time to discuss each child individually with their Key Person.
• The pre-school practitioners visiting the school to share information and offer suggestions for the physical space to ensure there are some familiar features for the children to enable them to feel comfortable and relaxed in the new environment. Pre-school practitioners will be able to offer suggestions on planning for the child during the first few weeks of term.
• Learning Journals are a document that share and celebrate learning both at home and in the setting over a period of time. i.e. a year. The contributors to this document include the child, the parents/carers’ and the Key Person.
• The recent developments in the use of Learning Journals have promoted a joined up approach to the child’s education between settings and families. It would be most beneficial for Reception class teachers to request that parents share their child’s Learning Journal, perhaps during a home visit or initial class/school visit.
• The class teacher can use this information to plan for children based on their interests and stage of development. The information contained in the Learning Journal can also be used as evidence for the child’s Early Years Foundation Stage profile.
• Inviting children, parents and/or Key Person into school for story time.
• Teachers’ undertaking home visits (see photocopy materials).
• Another lovely idea is to send the child a postcard during the summer holiday to let them know how much you are looking forward to seeing them in September.
• Invite parents and the child for a school lunch at the end of the summer term. This enables the child to experience a lunchtime routine and remove any concerns they might have. The parents can refer to the experience during the holiday to ensure that the child is comfortable.
• Ensure that children know where the toilets are, where they will eat lunch, where they will take part in physical development and what the clothing expectations are. Will they need to change into different clothes, as we know that these are things that can worry a child?
• Parents often need to know what a day in their child’s life will look like in the Foundation Stage classroom, what will they be doing/learning. Stay and play sessions can be very supportive for both the child and parents/carers. It will also help parents/carers to understand the importance and value of play and how learning takes place in the Reception environment.

• For children with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) you may have to plan well in advance in order to put in place everything that the child requires in order to make the best school start possible. It is important that opportunities are provided for all the agencies involved with the child to share information with the school.

• We also know that good links between schools and nurseries/pre-schools throughout the year are the most effective way of meeting all children’s needs during transitions. The more children and parents can see the pre-school and school working together the greater confidence they will have. It will enable them to feel more comfortable about the changes and we know that happy parents mean happy children.

• Sharing information with out of school provision for those children who attend another setting after school so that practitioners can build upon and further develop any child’s particular interest that you have observed (see card 3. Transitions Out of School)

• Above all your kindness and sensitivity will be essential as we are all individuals with our own concerns so being open to questions and having time to build relationships both with the parents/carers and children will be very valuable.
Transition To Year 1: School Approach

Moving from one Key Stage to another is recognised to be for some an anxious time that can impact on progress. To enable continuity and to support the needs of the individual child, one school’s approach has been to develop their practice by implementing the following:

- Agreement trialling of EYFS Profile assessments that involve Nursery, Reception and Year 1 staff
- Internal moderation involving Reception and Year 1
- The Year 1 teacher attending LA Moderation and data meetings with the Reception teacher
- Regular visits by the Year 1 teacher to the Reception class during the summer term prior to transition into Year 1
- Year 1 teacher getting to know the parents by being in the Reception classroom occasionally in the morning and afternoon during Term 6 when parents are dropping off and collecting their children
- Reception children have a taster day with their new teacher in their new classroom experiencing the environment and becoming familiar with their journey from this class into the outside area, the toilets etc.
- The routine of the day and the environment in Term 1 mirror that which the children have been used to in their final term in Reception
- Parent/child consultation sessions at the start of Year 1 sharing Learning Journeys/final report/’My Unique Story’ and agreeing next steps for learning, thus engaging parents in their child’s learning
- Practices established with parents in Reception are built on including:
  - Parent’s involvement in Learning Journals
  - Parents supporting activities in the classroom
  - Termly ‘Stay and Play’ opportunities when a parent comes to school for either a morning or an afternoon and shadows their child
- Initial planning for Term 1 is drawn up by the Reception and Year 1 teachers ensuring that the teaching builds on the children’s skills, knowledge and interests

In some schools the teacher and/or the teaching assistant move into the Year 1 class with the children as their Key Person - this approach supports the theory of attachment.

* Further case studies of Transition into Year 1 can be found on the National Strategies website: http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/346537
* Useful documentation: ‘Continuing the Learning Journey’
A Journey of Transition from Reception to Year 1

There are plenty of opportunities for parents and children to visit Year 1 prior to transition

Parents are given a clear overview of the transition process and are kept up-to-date

Parent’s concerns are acknowledged and addressed sensitively

Staff such as SENCO or FLO are readily available as required

A curriculum evening for parents to introduce Key Stage 1

The ‘graduation’ from Reception is commemorated by a special event or book, in which the child, their parents and teachers are all involved

Following transition there is the opportunity for parents to visit and be shown around the Year 1 classroom by their children. The engagement that parents have enjoyed in their child’s learning in Reception is built upon

Children’s feeling are acknowledged and time is given to discussion and questions. Children’s suggestions are incorporated into the transition process

Opportunities for the Reception children to talk with current Year 1 children

Planned opportunities for Reception to play in the Year 1 playground

Children can reflect upon and share their achievements with Year 1 staff

Children can take some ownership of their new classroom by, for example, choosing their chair or peg, making their own label

Year 1 staff visit Reception to observe the children playing, the routines, how staff support child-initiated activities, the use of the outside

Some Year 1 resources are loaned to Reception prior to transition

Early Years Foundation Stage profiles, MUS, Learning Journeys are shared by Reception and Year 1 staff. Children’s interests and learning styles are discussed. Additional needs are highlighted

There is a booklet or ‘passport to Year 1’ for each child in which there are photos and information about their new class and teachers

Transition from Reception to Year 1 is more than just an event, it is a process.
A Setting’s Journey To Home Visits

Abbeyfields Day Nursery recognised that transitions for young children can cause them and their families’ anxiety. Following a conversation with an Early Years Foundation Stage Consultant about the benefits of home visiting the management team began to consider how children can be supported through transitions into the nursery and throughout their setting. The first task that they set themselves was to discuss benefits of home visits with the staff team and allocate three practitioners to coordinate the project. The coordinators began to research home visits but found little information relating to day-care.

The coordinators visited a local setting to gain information about their procedures. This highlighted the importance of risk assessment. The coordinators identified actions;

• Develop a written policy
• Produce a written rigorous and robust risk assessment
• Support all Key Persons to make a book about themselves
• Complete a pilot visit.

Key person books
Each member of staff was asked to make an A5 sized book about themselves containing pictures and information that they thought would interest the children. For example, what they looked like as a baby, pets, favourite foods and hobbies. Each book is copied and laminated and each child is given a book about their Key Person to share with parents. In addition each book area within the setting contains books about the Key Persons.

Home visit
A phone call is made to the parent initially offering a home visit. The Key Person visits the child in their own home and takes a letter of contract, booklet about the room, a registration form and the Key Person book. In addition the setting has purchased two bears ‘Lola’ and ‘Ted’. The bears have proved to be a big hit with the children who keep the bears at home and then bring them back when they start at the setting. The staff intend to make a book about ‘Lola’ and ‘Ted’ as they have done about each Key Person. During the home visits the Key Person finds out from parents about the child’s comforters and the child’s likes and dislikes. This helps when the child begins the settling in programme at the setting. For example, the Key Person is able to ensure that resources are available to support the child’s interest. Practitioners report a huge difference to building positive relationships with parents. In turn parents report the benefits in getting to know and talk about their child’s room and Key Person. The Key Persons report how beneficial the visits are to focus entirely on the child and parent.

The settling in programme
The setting has a clear policy that no more than two children start at the setting at one time. This supports children’s well being. In addition the setting ask parents to be part of the settling in process so that a child has their primary attachment close by whilst they are forming an attachment to their Key Person. During
the settling visits the management team ensure that the Key Person for that child is not in ratio. As a result, the Key Person can focus entirely on the new child and parent. This takes place everyday over at least two weeks. The setting reports how successful the home visits have been and how much more confident children appear.

**Transitions within the nursery**

When a child moves from their room the Key Person begins to visit with them to provide the emotional support the child needs. The child has the Key Person book to enable them to become familiar with their new special person. This supports positive relationships.

**Transition Case Study: From Baby Unit to Toddler Room**

Joe is 22 months old and together with the Key Person and Parents/Carers it was decided that he was ready, emotionally and physically, to move to the toddler room. Joe’s Key Person shared the settings transition policy and gave the parents a picture book with photos of his new Key Person and photos of the group room to read with him at home. Joe’s parents were also invited in to spend some time with him in his new group room. Joe’s new Key Person was introduced to them and invited them to share information about Joe. On the first visit to his new room Joe’s Key Person stayed with him for the whole time. Joe explored the new environment, often returning to receive comfort from his Key Person for reassurance, before he moved on to another area of the room. The amount of time Joe spent in his new room increased over a period of two weeks. During this time his current Key Person reduced the amount of time she spent with him in his new group room and his new Key Person increased the amount of time she spent with him in his new group room.

After the initial 2 weeks both Key People, Joe and his parents all met to discuss the transition to see if more time was needed. The views of both Joe and his parents were recorded and added to his Learning Journey.

**Transition Case Study: For Child and their Carer**

Lateesha is a looked after child and is new to the area and the pre-school. After several meetings with her carer Lateesha’s Key Person Ben, notes that she spends a long time with her new carers at the beach. The carers talk to Ben about Lateesha’s disposition; she is a quiet, shy girl, who at the moment is worried and sad. At pre-school Lateesha plays alone or alongside another quiet girl, Jasmine. Ben encourages Lateesha to join in with Femi, Sophie and Robert who are all playing in the sand tray. He stays close by so that Lateesha can take her time to feel comfortable with the activity and models and encourages co-operative play amongst the group playing in the sand tray. Ben notices how Lateesha caresses the sand and runs her fingers over the different shells. He sensitively creates situations where Lateesha can succeed for example, taking it in turns to find the shells he buries in the sand. Ben then encourages her and Robert to fill the sand bucket and then suggests that Lateesha gently tips over the bucket to reveal an amazing sand castle. Ben praises Lateesha in-front of the group exclaiming what a good sand castle maker she has become. Robert asks her to do it again. Ben tells Lateesha how friendly Robert is and how much fun he had making a sand castle with her. Ben takes photographs of the sand play and stays close by to Lateesha. Later, using the photographs, Ben and Lateesha make a book together called ‘Lateesha playing in the sand
tray’. They share it with the rest of the group and Robert laughs and says ‘Teesh’ as a good sand castle maker’. When it is time to go home, Lateesha takes her new book to share her experience with her carers. Ben makes sure that the sand play is available every morning when Lateesha arrives with a selection of different shells and puts together a basket of treasures that have different textures. Each day Lateesha brings the book back to pre-school and begins her session in the sand. She spends long periods of time exploring and investigating the basket of treasure. This has become part of Lateesha’s transition from her new home into pre-school.

**Transition Case Study: Nursery to Reception**

Prior to Oliver starting in Reception there had been several opportunities to visit, for example story time, play session and teddy bear’s picnic. Oliver’s parents had also been welcomed to these sessions in addition to a meeting with the Reception teacher and a curriculum evening which outlined the provision of the Reception year and how this built smoothly on Nursery experiences.

During his first visit to his future Reception classroom Oliver was very reluctant to leave his parent’s side, he didn’t know anyone else in the class and despite his parents best efforts he would not interact with the other children. The parents were clearly worried as they could see most of the other children happily playing with each other.

Through discussions with Oliver and his parents the teacher found out that he was a big fan of Thomas the Tank engine. Knowing that one of the other classes had a Thomas train set the teacher ensured that this was available for Oliver’s next visit. This train set proved to be the key to unlocking Oliver’s reluctance to participate. He appeared comforted by its familiarity and straight away started playing with it. As the session progressed other children joined Oliver and he was soon beginning to interact with his future classmates.

**Transition Case Study: Out of School Club**

A new child ‘Malini’ started at the out of school club. Her Key Person was there to welcome her and support her during the session. Malini chose to play with a figure head whose long brown hair she could brush. The Key Person found another doll with long blond hair and brushed her doll’s hair, sitting alongside Malini. After a few minutes Malini became interested in the doll that the Key Person was using and watched her Key Person. The Key Person was then able to engage Malini in conversation and ask her about the doll that she was playing with. This ensured that Malini was not overwhelmed by attention before she was ready, but that she was supported to settle in her own time and in her own way, ensuring that her transition into the setting went smoothly.
Transition Case Study: Supporting children who speak English as an additional language

Alan came from Poland and English was an additional language. His mother had told the staff at the after school club that he liked to play chess. The setting ensured that his Key Person could also play chess. Playing chess was Alan’s way of settling into a new environment where the language spoken was not his own. He enjoyed playing chess with his Key Person. A younger child became interested in the chess game and Alan was able to explain to the younger child how chess worked and started to teach the younger child some of the chess moves. After some time the younger child and Alan were able to play a game of chess together; as a result this deeply engaged both children in the game, ensuring that Alan’s well being and involvement was high. Alan had been welcomed into the setting and had been initially supported to settle in through the good relationship that the staff built up with his mother. Using the information that was shared at the start of the relationship the staff had supported Alan to settle into the setting using Alan’s interests and skills. Alan had then been supported to develop enough English to be able to teach another child how to play the game that he loved so much. This further improved Alan’s self esteem and ensured that Alan’s transition into the setting was well managed and enjoyable.

Transition Case Study: Reception to Year 1

Zoe is five years old; she has global learning delay and has full time one to one support. Her parents had many concerns about her ability to cope with the transition to year 1.

During term 6 the Reception teacher arranged for Zoe’s Key Person (her Learning Support Assistant) to make a photo book with Zoe. This included photos of her new classroom and teacher as well as details about her pets and hobbies. This book was shared with Zoe’s parents and they used this over the summer holiday to help Zoe to understand what life would be like in year 1. The school also arranged for Zoe’s parents to visit the year 1 classroom and teacher as well attending a curriculum evening.

Zoe’s Key Person was moving into year 1 with Zoe to ensure consistency and continuity for her in the new learning environment. Had this not been possible then there would have been a planned programme of transition in term 6 which allowed for the new Learning Support Assistant to spend time with Zoe in the Reception class and her current Key Person to accompany Zoe on several visits into year 1.

In addition to this Zoe joined the rest of the Reception class on visits to year 1 for story time sessions. The year 1 teacher also made visits to the children in the Reception class, so that she started to become a familiar adult to the children before they made the transition into year 1.
Effective Transitions

Transition Audit Tool

A setting with well thought out transition processes indicates a setting with a genuine understanding of the ‘Unique child’ as a factor in achieving quality for all.

The Self Evaluation Audit should be a whole team approach and the catalyst for discussion and reflection. Questions require robust discussions of the evidence before deciding if:
Y – yes, in place;
P – partially in place;
N – no, not in place;
DK – do not know, no evidence either way.

How do you know? What is the impact on the children?

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<th>Key questions /Indicators</th>
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<td>Do you:</td>
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<td>• Allocate a key person and buddy prior to the child starting and meet with staff/key people in advance to plan and prepare for children’s transition from home/new room/school/Out of school setting?</td>
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<td>• Allocate sufficient time for preparing staff/parents/carers/children and for staff to access, read and share information?</td>
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<td>• Organise and support home visits?</td>
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<td>• Make particular effort to build strong links with carers of ‘looked after children’?</td>
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<td>• Access and read all incoming information on individual children, highlight those likely to be vulnerable and have special or additional needs, and brief all staff?</td>
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<td>• Plan a programme of informal visits and frequent drop-in sessions to your setting?</td>
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<td>• Prepare welcome packs with pictures and information about key people and rooms within the setting that a child can share with their parent/carer?</td>
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<td>• Seek sufficient information on your admissions forms to meet the EYFS welfare requirements?</td>
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<td>• Use this information to plan for the learning environment to respond to children’s interests/schema/individual needs?</td>
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<td>• Use photographs of the child and their family to foster a sense of belonging?</td>
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<td>• Ask older children to prepare materials and information that they think would be helpful to new children?</td>
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- Have a buddy system so that children who are settled can support new children?
- Liaise with the child’s school teacher/school Special Educational Needs Coordinator/Childminder?
- Offer flexible/staggered start times?
- Review each child’s settling in on a daily basis with parents/carers and key person?
- Use milestone language/visual prompts with young children to support their understanding of change?
- Create common areas where different age groups can mingle to foster good transition through mixing with other staff and children?
- Ensure that there are not too many adults for each child to relate to and that they all have the same expectations?
- Ensure that practitioners establish what the most stressful times are for each child new into the setting and what support strategies they put into place, such as break, lunchtime, toileting and assemblies?

What is the impact of your transition processes on meeting the needs of each unique child?

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Areas for further development/Next steps

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*The Quality Improvement Support programme (EYQISP) can provide further information; you can download this publication at: [www.standards.dcfs.gov.uk](http://www.standards.dcfs.gov.uk)*
# Effective Transitions for Out of school provision

## Transition Audit Tool

A setting with well thought out transition processes indicates a setting with a genuine understanding of the ‘Unique child’ as a factor in achieving quality for all.

The Self Evaluation Audit should be a whole team approach and the catalyst for discussion and reflection. Questions require robust discussions of the evidence before deciding if:

- **Y** – yes, in place;
- **P** – partially in place;
- **N** – no, not in place;
- **DK** – do not know, no evidence either way.

*How do you know? What is the impact on the children?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key questions /Indicators</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>DK</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do you:</td>
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<td>• Review your admission pack/information pack to ensure that it is welcoming and informative and creates an ethos of including all parents/carers and children in the setting?</td>
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<td>• Ensure that staff have time to prepare to support children due to arrive and leave the setting effectively, including sharing information with parents and children?</td>
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<td>• Create a robust framework for transitions with your staff at staff meetings?</td>
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<td>• Find out who else is working with the child, e.g. the school SENCO, and develop a partnership with them to support the children?</td>
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<td>• Arrange formal and informal visits for children and parents/carers when the key person is working to ensure that everyone is supported through the transition process effectively?</td>
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<td>• Use the visits to observe the children and evaluate their choices of play so that you can plan your environment to include the interests of children new to the setting?</td>
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<td>• Add photos of the children new to the setting alongside existing photos, ensuring that they feel welcomed, valued and included?</td>
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<td>• Have a buddy system so that children who are settled in the setting can support new children?</td>
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<td>• Arrange for the key person to liaise with the EYFS teacher to ensure that links are made to support the children through the transition process and during their time in the setting. Share significant developments to support the EYFS profile and assessments.</td>
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- Regularly review how well a child is settling in and how you will gain information from the child, the parents/carers and staff to ensure that the transition process is meeting the needs of the child?

- Ensure that children have an appropriate ending to their time in the club and support the child/parents/carers individual needs sensitively when they leave the setting?

- Liaise with other providers where children attend more than one setting to ensure consistency and continuity of care?

What is the impact of your transition processes on meeting the needs of each unique child?
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Areas for further development/Next steps

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Early school experiences: A selection of books for young children

Ahlberg, Janet and Allan Starting school Viking Kestrel, 1988 In typical Alhberg style, there is a lot to talk about as we are shown school from day one to the end of term.

Bailey, Donna and Peter Greenland My first day at school Macmillan, 1989 - Photos, with a couple of lines of simple text per page.


Hill, Eric Spot goes to school Penguin, 2004 - A classic, featuring the popular dog. (Reprint)

Hunter, Rebecca and Chris Fairclough, My first day at school Evans, 2000 - Photos of Roshaun's first day at infants' school. Brief notes for parents and teachers are included.

Parker, Vic Who helps us at school? Heinemann, 2004 - Photos, speech bubble and captions help children familiarise themselves with a school community.

Phillips Mitchell, Rita The Gotcha smile Orchard, 1998

Pipe, Jim Going to school Watts, 2001 In a series for beginner readers, it is also useful to read to, and discuss with, younger children.

Pragoff, Fiona and Peter Heaslip Starting school Methuen, 1986 Lucy has been to nursery – but would big school be different? Photographs show her having fun.


Simon, Francesca and Peta Coplans Spider school Orion, 1996 Kate is anxious and dreads going to school – but the reality is far better than she thought possible.

Smee, Nicola Freddie goes to playgroup Orchard Books, 2003 A reassuring book for toddlers.

Stones, Rosemary Rosie's first day at school Happy Cat Books, 2002

Waddell. Martin Owl babies Walker Books 2006 (Reprint) A story about separation and mum’s return

Billy and the Big New School. Catherine and Laurence Anholt. (2009 Orchard) In this picture book Billy is not sure about starting school; thinking about it is making him feel ‘funny inside’. He soon finds out how much fun it can be!


All My Friends. Gill Lobel and Jo Blake. (Tamarind Books. 2008) In this picture book, the thought of starting school is giving Keisha a tummy ache. She is worried about making friends and becomes even more anxious when she looses her Russian dolls. However, as her new class help her search she soon realises there are lots of friends to be made.
A couple of suggestions of Early Years/KS1 books that focus on transition to school from another country:-

This picture book is a story of transition from war torn Somalia to the UK. The story follows Hassan’s first days at school.

Christophe’s Story. Nicki Cornwell. (Frances Lincoln. 2006)
This chapter book offers a powerful story of young Christophe as he adapts to a new life in the UK. His family are seeking asylum, having fled from Rwanda. As Christophe makes the transition to a new country, new school, a new language he wants to share his story.

Theories of childhood by Carol Garhart Mooney, redleaf press 2000

Involving parents in their children’s learning, by Margy Whalley and the pen green team, PCP 2007

Understanding children’s challenging behaviour, Penny Mukherji, Nelson Thones, 2001


Playwork - Play and Care for Children 5-15 by Annie Davy ISBN 1 86152 666 0


Transitions really matter

Guidance to consider
Home visits – these can be very beneficial to establish a strong relationship with parents and their child (babies or young children) right from the start. The home environment allows the child and their parents to be at ease and avoid anxieties of new places, situations and people. You can share in the child’s personal culture to develop an understanding of their family life. The key person can ease transitions into the setting by taking and leaving a photographic book with a picture of themselves and of rooms in the setting for parents to share with their child. Small soft toys can also help ease a child’s transition into nursery; at the home visit the key person gives the child a small soft toy to take care of and bring back and forth to the setting.

Before the child’s starts school a home visit enables the teacher to meet the child and their family in an environment where the child feels most comfortable and relaxed. Teachers can use the opportunity to find out about the children’s interest, what excites them and what motivates them and any concerns or worries that parents/carer’s might have. These visits might take place at the end of the summer term, or in the afternoons of the first two weeks of the September term time when children often start morning only.

At the home visit why not take a photo of Reception staff or child’s Key Person that they can keep. While at the home take a photo of the child in their favourite space to use as their coat peg picture so that there is always a link with home available.

You could provide the child with a ‘social story’. The adults make a small book to leave with the child. i.e. this is a picture of my school, this is a picture of my classroom, this is a picture of my Key Person.

Seeking information
If home visits are not an option the parent as the expert on their child should be invited to the setting to share information with the key person about their child’s interests and needs before the child’s settling in visits are introduced. You should know enough about the child to be able to fully prepare for their first visit to the setting. For example, do they have a space for their belongings? Is a familiar toy out? At this time it is very important that the parent makes the commitment to be with the child at every settling visit until the child’s relationship with the key person is established. Similarly where possible the management of the setting should organise staffing so that the key person is readily available to the child and parent.

Settling in visits
It takes regular visits for a child to make an attachment and therefore it is important that the parent and child make several short visits together before the child is ever left without them. During these visits with the parent it is beneficial for the key person to observe the parent feeding and changing their child so that they can make this experience as familiar to the child as possible. Visits will of course vary depending on the child but after several visits over a week or so you may find that the child smiles in recognition of their key person. This may be an indicator that the child is ready to be left for a very short period without their parent. At this point the child can be left for a short period of time. Remember that it is important that the child has the opportunity to say goodbye and any of the child’s rituals are respected. For example, waving goodbye until mummy is out of sight, keeping their coat on or holding onto their bag. It is worth considering at this point if there is a room in your setting where the parent can wait comfortably and maybe offered a drink. This routine may continue for a period of time until both the parent and the key person agree that the child is happy and secure to be left for a whole session. Even the youngest baby will display their well-being through non-verbal communication. Older children will say goodbye confidently.
**Other things to consider**

Items of comfort for example, blankets, dummies and toys from home can often be a great source of comfort to a young child at times when they are feeling anxious. These items should be treated with great respect and be available to the child at any chosen time. The key person must ensure that the child knows that their comforter is stored safely and easily accessible to them whenever they need it.

It is important to continue the key person relationship with the child and family to best support the child's emotional well-being. A child who presents as happy and well settled may need to re-visit these settling in principals at difficult times during their lives. For example, new baby, house move, death and family break-up. Equally, when a child moves into a new room within the same setting all these principles need to be applied. Best practice would be that the key person would transition with the child. However, because of organisational difficulties that may prevent this happening then the key person with parental support should be integral to the move to support relationships and attachment with the new key person.

**Suggested Reading**


Goldschmied, E and Jackson, S. (1994) *People Under Three*


Resources and Links to Support Transitions

  Tel: 0845 60 222 60

- Continuing the learning journey, QCA 2005 REF: QCA/05/1590
  Training pack is available to download from http://www.qca.org.uk/15005.html
  The DVD that accompanies the training pack is available to borrow from the Primary Strategy Early Years Team
  Tel: 020 7527 5953

- The Little book of transitions, Featherstone Education Ltd
  Tel: 01858 881213
  http://www.featherstone.uk.com

- Listening to young children, Open University Press 2003
  www.openup.co.uk

- Transitions in the Early Years Eds. Aline-Wendy Dunlop & Hilary Fabian.
  Routledge 2002

- Helping children cope with change, Jennie Lindon. Early Education.
  Tel: 020 7539 5400
  www.early-education.org.uk

- The child’s experience of primary school, The child psychotherapy trust
  Tel: 020 7284 1355
  www.childpsychotherapytrust.org.uk

- Beyond reception: transition to year 1
  www.communityplaythings.co.uk

- www.islingtonschoolsemas.net/mobility.home.htm

- www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

- www.dfes.gov.uk/research

- www.literacytrust.org.uk

- www.scottishpolicynet.org.uk