Transition to Pre-school

http://earlyyearsmatters.co.uk/

Preparing Your Child for Pre-School

Transition into Reception classes

Transition is always about change; particularly adjusting to change – and successful change is about then forgetting that the change happened. When young children move from a pre-school environment such as from home or a childminder or a daycare setting into a school environment they will experience huge change in their lives. This change is often accepted by adults with little idea of what the change will mean for the child. This is simply because adults often take things for granted – so a parent or teacher might unwittingly fail to recognise what is involved for the child. If transition is to be successful, from pre-school to school, preparation should begin early so that there is good communication between the two organisations. This needs to be considered carefully by leaders who will decide how best to support the transition process.

Transition into Key Stage 1

Through the EYFS children are entitled to a curriculum that is based on what interests them and what they already know, can do and understand. Year 1 teachers build on these starting points and continue to nurture children’s natural desire for learning. As they continue their journey into Year 1 consideration should be given to what children experience as similar in Reception and Year 1 classes and how this can be developed further. This should include consideration of physical resources such as sand, water and construction and opportunities for learning through first hand-experiences. There should be opportunities for children to initiate activities themselves and to follow up their own interests independently. Headteachers and senior managers influence smooth transitions from the EYFS to Key Stage 1 through school organisation, staffing, resourcing and the transfer of information about children’s learning. Parents should be encouraged to continue to be involved as partners in their children’s learning.
From: Moving On: Supporting children’s transitions across the Early Years Foundation Stage
http://www.cornwalllearning.org/

My Picture: the parent’s voice

This form should be completed by the key person with the parent/carer, perhaps during a home visit or on a visit to the setting

**Good practice points to consider:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of child:</th>
<th>Date of birth:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell us about your family. Who lives in your house? Which other people are important to your child, including friends? What languages are spoken at home? What special times do you share as a family, e.g. Celebrations, family times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| What sort of things does your child enjoy doing at home? Does s/he have any favourite toys, books, interests or activities? Is there anything your child does not enjoy? |

| What other provision has your child been attending (such as Children’s Centre groups, preschool, childminder etc.)? |

| What does your child’s week look like? Do they attend any other childcare provision or clubs? |
How to help transition to secondary school for children identified as ‘at risk of dyslexia’

The college works closely with primary schools to put in place strategies which will help this process.

Transition can be a daunting time for these reasons:

- Remembering more names – there are a lot more children and teachers
- Changing classrooms – having to find your way around
- Timetables – having to know where they should be and when
- More books and equipment – what do I need each day?
- HOMEWORK – organising each evening
- Information overload – lots of new vocabulary and terminology
- Working with new support staff

How to help

What the college provides

- Early identification of students needing extra support
- Read Write Inc programme for some students
- The DRIVE programme (Dyslexia Recovery) for students identified by their spelling age.
- Dyslexia Champion support – all year 7 students identified by primary school as at risk of dyslexia will meet with the Champion within the first few weeks to establish contact and assess provision.
- All staff will have up to date information on each student explaining how they learn best and what support they need to access the learning within the class.
- All staff will have knowledge of the relevant legislation, rights of the student and responsibilities of the parent or carer to best support the pupil before, during and after transition.
- Provides a glossary of terms used in new subjects.

How you can help

- Help your child read timetables – make several copies (the school can provide these)
- Put a BIG copy of the timetable on their bedroom wall
- Remind them to check their planner – so they know what equipment they will need, they can then prepare their bag the night before.

Helston Community College
Dyslexia Champion – Mrs Caroline Bloor
Church Hill
Helston
TR13 8NR
Telephone 01326 572685

Cornwall Dyslexia Association
Dyslexia Advice & Information Centre
13 Kenwyn Street,
Truro
TR1 3DJ
Telephone 01872 222911
Congratulations to Year 7 student Emily Full, on winning the Dyslexia Awareness Poetry competition.

Making Sense of Dyslexia

Difficulty always comes in different forms but every difficulty comes with a way to make it better.

You're never alone.

Some dyslexics struggle through life but with people picking them up again they will always get there.

Learning all the possibilities with a little bit of help.

Every problem has a solution, they just need to be found.

X - raying all ways of helping dyslexic and inspire many to build an amazing, dyslexia friendly environment.

Inside all dyslexics minds there are phenomenal ideas, they are just trapped and they need something to set them free.

Anyone can achieve great things no matter what holds them back.

Parent Champions

Making a difference for parents and carers in your community

The Dyslexia-SpLD Trust continues to recruit Parent Champions across the UK to spread the word about support available from the dyslexia sector. We are looking for volunteers who are passionate about helping parents and carers of children with dyslexia and specific learning difficulties - and would like to make a difference by helping families in their local community; all you need to do is tell others about what support is out there.

Parent Champions

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This Leaflet offers useful information and advice to Parents/Carers of children with Dyslexia during their transition from Primary to Secondary School.
Moving on:
Supporting children’s transitions across the Early Years Foundation Stage
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Section 1:
Introduction and Contents
Moving on:
Supporting children’s transitions across the Early Years Foundation Stage

A collection of documents you can use to collect information about children at transition points together with examples of good practice and support materials.

Introduction

Over 2008-9 Cornwall ran a pilot project to explore effective transitions between pre-school providers and school. The purpose of this project was to gather good practice and also to explore ways in which transition processes could be improved. One of the key findings of the project was that practitioners would welcome a more coherent set of documents which could be used across Cornwall to support transitions.

Following further consultation and piloting in schools and pre-school settings, EY consultants from Cornwall have now produced a set of documents, with much valued support from other LA's via the Southwest Assessment Group. These documents form the main content of this booklet. In addition, some of the good practice identified by the project working groups and other teachers across Cornwall has also been included.

Why are transitions important for children?

By the time children start school, they may have attended a number of pre-school providers, perhaps spending time with a child-minder or in a day nursery before moving on to a pre-school and then finally a Reception Class. While change can be exciting and transitions are often anticipated very positively, nevertheless, research shows that transitions can be stressful for children, sometimes having a far-reaching effect on their emotional wellbeing. If this happens, learning and development may come to a standstill until children feel secure again.

However, if children are supported through the process, transition can be a positive step, building resilience and openness to change and encouraging children to embrace new experiences.

For this to happen, transitions must be planned carefully. The original EYFS guidance says that ‘Transition should be seen as a process, not an event, and should be planned for and discussed with children and parents’ (paragraph 1.30).

Claire Tickell, in her 2011 review of the EYFS reaffirms this view:

‘…this information could be used to guide children’s ongoing development – for example, to support the transition between early years settings, such as between a childminder and a nursery class. …Where children move from one type of early years care to another, the rich information already gathered should be shared to provide smooth support for ongoing development’ (Paragraph 3.14)

About this document

This booklet is divided into a number of sections, covering the period from when children first begin to attend a pre-school setting until the point of transition to school. Documents are included to enable practitioners to gather a range of information about children at each transition point: both descriptive information and more numerical information, summarising children’s progress. Both kinds of information are important if children are to settle quickly into their new setting and continue to learn and develop. The child and parent’s voice also need to be expressed at the point of transition, and documents to support this process are also included.
Practitioners are encouraged to personalise and adapt these documents to meet their own needs and circumstances.

Before making changes to documents, it is always best for practitioners from feeder and receiving any of the transition settings to meet together so that they can jointly establish what kind of information is most useful. This will also prevent ‘old’ and ‘new’ settings duplicating documentation, for instance asking parents for information that has already been collected.

Sharing information between settings at the point of transition

It is an expectation of EYFS that practitioners will share information as children move from one setting to another or between settings where children attend more than one. The original statutory Framework for the EYFS states that ‘Where children receive education and care in more than one setting, practitioners must ensure continuity and coherence by sharing relevant information with each other and with parents’ (paragraph 1.16). And paragraph 1.3 in the Practice Guidance states that ‘Settings should communicate information which will secure continuity of experience for the child between settings’.

Settings do need to have the consent of parents for records to be shared with other professionals, and we recommend that pre-school providers now seek this written parental permission at the time of the child’s admission to the setting, so enabling them to share information as and when appropriate with settings the child may go on to attend in the future: this would include, for instance, learning journeys or summaries of attainment.

Throughout this document the term ‘parents’ has been used to include all carers and guardians of young children.

Cornwall LA are grateful to other local authorities within the Southwest Assessment Group who have generously shared their practice.
Section 2: Attending an early years setting for the first time
First steps: attending an early years setting for the first time

Effective settling in procedures are especially vital for very young children, both from the child’s and the parent’s point of view. Gathering information about the child’s views and their individual needs, as well as respecting the wishes and preferences of parents will help parents to feel confident and children to feel safe, secure and comfortable in the setting and with staff as quickly as possible.

Gathering information during your initial meeting with parents can feel a bit like firing a long series of questions, which parents answer briefly, but not always really illuminating the child’s unique personality. Therefore the documents in this section are very open ended, and will offer prompts which can guide a dialogue with parents, to provide a deeper shared understanding about a child.

Of course, you will have statutory information to collect too (consents, medical information etc), but you will have different formats for these already, which will vary from one type of setting to another.

The documents in this booklet can be used flexibly and some will be appropriate to use several times (over several transitions). We suggest you might like to use them in the order presented, i.e. first the ‘My Picture: the parent’s voice’ proforma, filled in at the home visit or when practitioner and parent have their first preparatory meeting. The ‘Settling in plan’ would also be competed at this time (you might like to make a copy for parents to keep). Then, at the end of this visit, the parent could be given the ‘My picture: the child’s voice’ booklet to complete over a period of days/ weeks with the child.

Good practice points to consider:

• How do you provide parents/carers with information before the child starts, e.g. welcome pack, prospectus pack, policies, translated documents, meetings, open evenings?
• How do you provide opportunities for parents/carers and children to visit before the child starts?
• Do you offer home visits? (see guidance notes in next section)
• Does the key person welcome the parents/carers and child at the first session?
• How do you explain to parents/carers the settling in process and decide the best way forward for their child together?
• When and how do you decide the child has settled?
• How do you manage the start of the session to allow time to welcome individuals, e.g. Staggered arrival times and start dates?
• How do you support parents to build relationships with each other?
• Have you ensured all your welfare requirements are met including the collection of children, (i.e. using a password system)?
My Picture: the parent’s voice

This form should be completed by the key person with the parent/carer, perhaps during a home visit or on a visit to the setting

**Good practice points to consider:**

<table>
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Tell us about your family. Who lives in your house? Which other people are important to your child, including friends? What languages are spoken at home? What special times do you share as a family, e.g. Celebrations, family times?

What sort of things does your child enjoy doing at home? Does s/he have any favourite toys, books, interests or activities? Is there anything your child does not enjoy?

Tell us about your child’s routines, (bedtime, naptimes, comfort routines, toileting/ nappy routines).
Meal/snack time routines (including any foods your child likes/ dislikes).
Does your child use any special words?
Tell us about your child. What makes your child happy, sad, angry, frightened? How does he/she respond to new people/situations?

What other provision has your child been attending (such as Children’s Centre groups, preschool, childminder etc.)?

What does your child’s week look like? Do they attend any other childcare provision or clubs?

Signed: ___________________________ Parent/carer

Signed: ___________________________ Key person/practitioner

Date: _____________________________
Settling in plan

We aim to:

• work closely with you
• support your child in the move from home, family and familiar people into the new community of the setting
• help your child make a strong attachment to his or her key person
• help your child feel secure and confident in the setting
• work with you to help your child with any difficulties that might arise

<table>
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</table>

What would the parent like us to do for the child?

Induction sessions:

What the setting will do:

Things to do at home:

Copy for parent/s
**Settling in plan: guidance notes**

**We aim to:**

- work closely with you
- support your child in the move from home, family and familiar people into the new community of the setting
- help your child make a strong attachment to his or her key person
- help your child feel secure and confident in the setting
- work with you to help your child with any difficulties that might arise

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</table>

**What would the parent like us to do for the child?**

**Guidance for practitioner:**
Reassure parents that it is natural for children to sometimes feel upset or angry and that this can be a difficult time for parents too. No matter how confident the child and parent feel, it is still beneficial to give plenty of time for the settling in process.

**Induction sessions:**

**Guidance for practitioner:**
Remember to plan enough time for children to adjust to separation from the parent/carer and for the child to get to know the setting. Timing needs to be flexible and support the needs of the individual child and family.

**What the setting will do:**

**Guidance for practitioner:**
Examples, offer a home visit, build relationship with the child and family, visual timetable (see example), introduce the child to other children and the environment, introduce the parent to other parents, key person to observe the child to support their well being.

**Things to do at home:**

**Guidance for practitioner:**
Complete ‘My Story book’ together. Plan for parent, or other important adult, to support the child during the settling in phase. Prepare the child for starting at the setting. Parent and child could look at books together about ‘starting playgroup’ etc.

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My Picture: the child’s voice
My Story
This is for you and your child to enjoy doing together

My name:

You could put a photo of your child here or he/she could draw a picture.

Now that your child is going to begin childcare, pre-school, nursery or school you can use this book to tell us anything you would like us to know about him/her and what makes him/her unique.

Wherever your child is going, it is important that we know all about him/her so we can make sure that we can provide the care and education that is best for him/her.

There are some pages to get you started but please add your own pages if you want to. There are also some ideas of the kinds of information you may like to include. You can put photographs and drawings in too.

Please bring this with you on the first day that your child starts at the setting to share with his/her key person. You will also have the opportunity to talk to staff about anything that is confidential.
Family and other special people

Who is in your family?
Who are your friends?
Who are the other special people in your life?
Do you have any pets?
Interests, likes and dislikes

What do you like to play with?
What is your favourite toy, book, TV programme, game etc?
What activities do you like best?
How do you spend time with your family?

Maybe time on the beach, visits to relatives, holidays, celebrations etc.?
Section 3:
Monitoring children’s progress across the EYFS
Monitoring children’s progress across the EYFS

As explained later in this section, children’s progress needs to be summarised from time to time, and this section includes some proformas you might want to use to do this. The completed documents can then be discussed with other practitioners (and parents too of course), along with more personal information about the child, at points of transition: from room to room within a setting, or as the child moves to a new setting and finally on to school. Learning Journeys, or other observational records, will also be used at these transition meetings to provide richer information about the child – the background information which has been used to support practitioners’ judgements.

Towards the end of this section, you will find some examples of how PRAMS can be used to monitor children’s progress. PRAMS is an online assessment system available free to all settings in Cornwall via the Foundation Stage Forum.

To login, go to www.foundation-stage.info and click on “Register”. There is a short form to complete, and then you will need Cornwall’s password which is Dozmary2010. The website includes a guided tour of the software.
Guidance notes for monitoring children’s progress

Formative and summative assessment in EYFS

There are two types of assessment in EYFS. The first is formative assessment, which practitioners should use on an ongoing basis to identify children’s needs and plan activities to meet them and support children’s future progress. In Cornwall, most practitioners choose to collect this ongoing observation evidence in a form of Learning Journey, and separate guidance is included outlining what is regarded as good practice (‘Learning Journeys: promoting best practice’ in resources, final section).

The second type of assessment is summative assessment, when practitioners take stock of children’s overall progress at a particular point in time.

The revised EYFS emphasises that both types of assessment remain important, but that paperwork needs to be kept to a minimum whilst still being effective. Included are some simple proformas you might like to use to summarise children’s progress from time to time.

Guidance notes for using the proformas:

- Summative assessment records should be completed each term (half-termly in schools, where attendance is normally full time)
- Judgements should be based on what children do consistently and independently
- As developmental phases are broad, and children may spend a whole year or more in one phase, many practitioners indicate using a colour code or by adding plus or minus symbols, whether a child is just entering a phase, securely working within it, or is towards the end of the phase (see completed examples). Systems such as these can be very effective in showing progress over time.
- When completing individual child summaries, it is important to record the child’s age at the time assessment is made. This gives an ‘at a glance’ picture of whether the child is working within, below or above expected levels for his/her age.
- Practitioners will discuss the child’s progress with parents from time to time, and there is space for parents to add their comments each term.
- A cohort tracking sheet can be used to monitor the progress of a whole cohort over time. Again, this is most helpful if separate records are kept for each cohort (say the group of children who will be 3 in a given academic year, or the group who will be 4, or in large settings, the group of children who start in the same term). This will enable settings to look at the cohort, all of whom will be of a similar age, and see quickly which children might be falling behind, and in which areas of learning and development, which will help to inform planning for such children. A free online cohort tracking system is available via the Early Years forum and all settings in Cornwall currently have free use of this forum/website. Alternatively, some settings use an Excel spreadsheet, see example included later in this section.
- On transition to school, settings will find it very useful and straightforward to summarise progress for the specific group of children going to each school in their locality. This means some settings will only need to make up one Transition sheet, while others will need to make three or four for all of the schools in their area. Transition summary proformas are included in Section 5.
What do Ofsted say regarding attainment on entry to nursery and Reception classes in schools?

Taken from Subsidiary Guidance: Supporting the inspection of maintained schools and academies from January 2012, Ofsted.

Attainment on entry to nursery at age three
Most children are likely to be working within the development matters band for 30–50 months, having shown competence in the preceding band for 22–36 months. This may be referred to as the age-related expectation at the beginning of nursery. Consider this guidance for all six areas of learning when judging attainment on entry to nursery, taking into account children’s ages on entry.

Attainment on entry is likely to be below age-related expectations where a substantial proportion of children … do not demonstrate all of the elements in the 22–36 month band.

Attainment on entry to reception at age four
Most children are likely to demonstrate some of the elements of skill, knowledge and understanding within the development matters band for 40–60+ months, in addition to all of the elements in the preceding band for 30–50 months.

This may be referred to as the age-related expectation at the beginning of reception. Consider all six areas of learning when judging attainment on entry to reception, taking into account children’s ages on entry. Attainment on entry is likely to be below age-related expectations where a substantial proportion of children in a school do not demonstrate all of the elements in the 30–50 month band.

The statutory early learning goals establish national expectations for most children to reach by the end of Reception Year. These are the statements in bold in the 40–60+ month band.

See appendices for more information from Ofsted regarding on-entry attainment and judging progress in the EYFS.

General guidance for using data:
Data by itself cannot support children progress or identify next steps in learning. It should be analysed to discover issues that inform further thinking, resulting in improved practice and outcomes.

Effective analysis of children’s progress will enable leaders to:
- Spot trends and patterns in development
- Understand what is working well in the setting
- Identify any gaps in learning
- Identify any particular groups of children whose needs may not be met
- Ask any questions about gaps that can lead to improvements in practice and provision
- Ensure children are offered the right environment and opportunities to reach their potential and enjoy learning through their play and planned activities
- See also fold out sheet from Progress Matters, in Resources section.
# My Picture: EYFS Individual Termly/Half-termly Progress Monitoring Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of child:</th>
<th>Date of birth:</th>
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**EYFS Individual Termly/Half-termly Progress Monitoring Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child's age in months (at time of assessment)</th>
<th>Key person’s summative comments with dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Enter Phase of Development from development matters below (e.g. 30-50 = working within, 30-50+ = completed, or almost completed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Self-confidence and self-awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing feelings and behaviour</td>
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<td>Making relationships</td>
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<th><strong>Communication and Language</strong></th>
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<td>Listening and attention</td>
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<td>Understanding</td>
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<td>Speaking</td>
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<td>Moving and handling</td>
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<td>Health and self-care</td>
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<td>Reading</td>
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<td>Writing</td>
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| Mathematics         | Numbers | | | | | |
|                     | Shape, space and measures | | | | | |

| Understanding the world | People and communities | | | | | |
|                         | The world | | | | | |
|                         | Technology | | | | | |

| Expressive arts and design | Exploring and using media and materials | | | | | |
|                            | Being imaginative | | | | | |

See attached page for Parents/carers’ comments with dates and signatures
### My Picture: EYFS Individual Termly/Half-termly Progress Monitoring Sheet

#### Parents / Carers Feedback

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<th>Parents/carers’ comments with dates and signatures</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents/carers’ comments with dates and signatures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### My Picture: EYFS Individual Termly/Half-termly Progress Monitoring Sheet

**Name of child:** Tamsin  
**Date of birth:** 14.08.08

**Key:** Just entering phase **RED**, Working securely within phase **AMBER**, Completed (or almost completed) phase **GREEN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child's age in months (at time of assessment)</td>
<td>40 months</td>
<td>44 months</td>
<td>47 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Child's age in months (at time of assessment)**

- 40 months
- 44 months
- 47 months

**Enter Phase of Development** from development matters below (e.g. 30-50 = working within, 30-50+ = completed, or almost completed)

#### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dec 2011</th>
<th>April 2012</th>
<th>July 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence and self-awareness</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>40-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing feelings and behaviour</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making relationships</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Communication and Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dec 2011</th>
<th>April 2012</th>
<th>July 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening and attention</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>40-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>40-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>22-36</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>40-60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Physical development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dec 2011</th>
<th>April 2012</th>
<th>July 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moving and handling</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>40-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and self-care</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>40-60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dec 2011</th>
<th>April 2012</th>
<th>July 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## My Picture: EYFS Individual Termly/Half-termly Progress Monitoring Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>People and communities</th>
<th>The world</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Exploring and using media and materials</th>
<th>Being imaginative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
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<td>30-50</td>
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<td>40-60</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>40-60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See attached page for Parents/carers' comments with dates and signatures
## My Picture: EYFS Individual Termly/Half-termly Progress Monitoring Sheet
### Parents / Carers Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents/carers’ comments with dates and signatures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### My Picture: EYFS Individual Termly/Half-termly Progress Monitoring Sheet

**Name of child:** Tamsin  
**Date of birth:** 14.08.08

Key: 30-50-: just entering phase 30-50 months, 30-50+: working securely within phase, 30-50+: completed (or almost completed) phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EYFS Individual Termly/Half-termly Progress Monitoring Sheet</th>
<th>Dec 2011</th>
<th>April 2012</th>
<th>July 2012</th>
<th>Key person’s summative comments with dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child’s age in months (at time of assessment)</td>
<td>40 months</td>
<td>44 months</td>
<td>47 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter Phase of Development from development matters below (e.g. 30-50 = working within, 30-50+ = completed, or almost completed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence and self-awareness</td>
<td>30-50-</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>40-60-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing feelings and behaviour</td>
<td>30-50-</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making relationships</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50+</td>
<td>30-50+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication and Language</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and attention</td>
<td>30-50-</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>40-60-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50+</td>
<td>40-60-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>22-36+</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>40-60-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Physical development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving and handling</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50+</td>
<td>40-60-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and self-care</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50+</td>
<td>30-50+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>30-50-</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>30-50-</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
## My Picture: EYFS Individual Termly/Half-termly Progress Monitoring Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>30-50</th>
<th>30-50</th>
<th>40-60 -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape, space and measures</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50 +</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding the world</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People and communities</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50 +</td>
<td>40-60 -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The world</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50 +</td>
<td>30-50 +</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>30-50 +</td>
<td>30-50 +</td>
<td>30-50 +</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressive arts and design</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring and using media and materials</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50 +</td>
<td>30-50 +</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being imaginative</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>30-50 +</td>
<td>40-60 -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See attached page for Parents/carers’ comments with dates and signatures*
### My Picture: EYFS Individual Termly/Half-termly Progress Monitoring Sheet - Parents / Carers Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents/carers’ comments with dates and signatures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/carers’ comments with dates and signatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/carers’ comments with dates and signatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PRAMS: A free resource from the Foundation Stage Forum

http://eyfs.info/prams/pramsoverview.php
Section 4:
Transfers within a setting
Transitions within a setting (room to room)

Young children may spend several years in a pre-school setting, usually moving from one room to another as they get older. Transitions within a setting are often overlooked. Although they tend to be less stressful than transitions to a new setting, good transition practice can help to prepare children and their parents and ensure children settle quickly, enabling new key persons and practitioners to get to know children quickly, so that they can meet their needs and interests effectively.

As children move from one room to another, practitioners should take the opportunity to update their centrally held information about a child and a simple transfer proforma is included to enable you to do this in discussion with both child and parent. Summative assessment (see Section 3) will also be part of the information shared between practitioners at the point of transfer to the new room.
**My Picture: Transfer summary (room to room)**

To be completed by the key person with the child and shared with the parents/ carers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favourite activities</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favourite rhymes and stories</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Special friends               |                                |
| Relationships with peers     |                                |
| Stage of play                |                                |
| (parallel, co-operative etc) |                                |
| Size of group                |                                |
|                              |                                 |

| Special people at home        |                                |
|                              |                                 |

| Additional comments           |                                |
|                              |                                 |

| Parents/ carers comments      |                                |
|                              |                                 |

**Guidance for room to room transition sheet**

Although much of this information will have been collected previously, it will be helpful to update this sheet at the point of transfer as children’s interests, friends etc. change over time as do their family circumstances in some cases, and it is important that everyone has up to date information.
Section 5:
Moving on to a new setting, or to school
Moving on: transition to a new setting, or to school

In this section you will find documents for sharing information about children as they move on to a new setting or school, giving the new setting the information they need to ensure children settle as quickly as possible.

You will need to complete a summative assessment sheet (see Section 3) for each child. In addition, you may want to complete a cohort summary (in this section) summarising the starting points for children moving on to a particular school. If you use an Excel spread sheet it is a relatively easy job to highlight specific children and delete information about others before sharing with the new setting or school. Pairs of settings (e.g. school and feeder pre-school) might want to decide which forms are most useful and manageable, e.g. whether you prefer to complete assessments for each area of learning as a whole, or in separate strands.

You might also want to complete a transition document giving more general information about the child and how his transition can best be supported (in this section).

Settings receiving your children may also want to use documents in other sections to supplement their knowledge of the child (e.g. ‘My Picture: the parent’s voice’ or ‘My Picture: the child’s voice’, from Section 2).

Guidance on completing the transition documents

- The documents should be completed using information that the early years setting has gathered from ongoing observation and assessment of the individual child.
- Observations should be made on a regular basis throughout a child’s attendance at a setting, covering all six areas of learning and development.
- The information on the Transition Document will relate to Development Matters.
- Statements should be about what the child can do. They should show what a child can do consistently and independently in a range of situations.
- Parents and / or carer’s should be fully involved in the process and comments from parents should be included, (Parents/Carer’s Voice section)
- The child’s voice needs to be recorded. (Child’s Voice section)

Settings should ensure parents are aware of the setting policy that permission is given for the sharing of records.
### My Picture:

#### EYFS child transition summary (individual)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Years Setting:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tel no:</td>
<td>Mob No:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager:</td>
<td>Signature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Person</td>
<td>Signature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Date child started at setting:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Years Setting:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sessions/hours attended per week:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Child’s full name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name child is known by:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of birth:</td>
<td>Male / Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Names of Parents / Carers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language(s) spoken at home:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What languages, if any, are used at home other than English?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant information to support the child's transition**

*Please include friendships, experiences, objects, routines or activities that will support this child to settle into a new setting or school.*

*You may want to include information from other significant adults in a child’s life, e.g. grandparents / childminder.*
**My Picture:**

**Child transition summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child’s voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask the child what they would like their new teachers/practitioners to know about them. This could be through the child’s drawing / mark making or words scribed by an adult, e.g. what they like to do or are good at, things they need help with, things they are proud of, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent’s / Carer’s voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Parents might like to comment on what makes them proud about their child, or concerns or hopes for the future.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I give permission for this and other relevant information to be shared with appropriate settings/ other professionals.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent / Carer’s Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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My Picture:
Cohort Attainment Overview

Guidance on use of cohort attainment overview of learning and development for a group of children transferring to an individual school

To complete the grid (see also example sheet):

- Use the information from individual transition documents to record children’s names in the appropriate box. This means that each child’s name will appear seven times on the grid (more if you use the grid incorporating individual strands).
- When deciding where to record a child’s name you will decide on “best fit” across an area of Learning and Development.
- Children spend some time in each developmental phase, so you may like to indicate when a child is working securely within a phase, just entering a phase, or almost completing a phase, either using colour coding or adding plus and minus signs (see examples).
- You will need to complete a separate grid for each of the schools your children will be transferring to.
### My Picture:

#### Cohort Summary version 1

Summary of learning and development for a group of children transferring to an individual school.

**EYFS phases of development on transition to school**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
<th>PSED</th>
<th>Comm and Lang</th>
<th>PD</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
<th>Maths</th>
<th>UW</th>
<th>EAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth to 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 - 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My Picture:
Cohort Summary version 1 example
Summary of learning and development for a group of children transferring to an individual school.
EYFS phases of development on transition to school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
<th>PSED</th>
<th>Comm and Lang</th>
<th>PD</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
<th>Maths</th>
<th>UW</th>
<th>EAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 - 26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Will</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 - 36</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td>Will Carrie</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td>Will</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 50</td>
<td>James Carrie Ben Josh Maria Piran</td>
<td>Ben Carrie Ben Josh Maria Piran</td>
<td>Carrie James Ben Will Abi Josh Hari Maria Piran</td>
<td>Carrie James Ben Josh Hari Maria Piran</td>
<td>Carrie James Ben Josh Hari Maria Piran</td>
<td>Carrie James Ben Josh Hari Maria Piran</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 60</td>
<td>Abi Hari</td>
<td>Abi James Hari</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>Abi</td>
<td>Abi</td>
<td>Abi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ELG
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of setting:</th>
<th>Number of children:</th>
<th>Name of receiving school:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Birth - 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 - 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16 - 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22 - 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 - 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40 - 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ELG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Learning and Development for a group of children transferring to an individual school**

- **Communication and Language**
  - Listening and attention
  - Relationships
  - Behaviour
  - Managing feelings
  - Awareness
  - Self-confidence

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
  - Self-confidence
  - Understanding the world
  - Communities
  - People and
    - Technology
  - The World

- **Mathematics**
  - Shapes, space and measure
  - Numbers
  - Writing
  - Reading

- **Physical Development**
  - Health and self-care
  - Moving and handling
  - Speaking

- **Expressive Arts and Design**
  - Exploring and using media and materials
  - Being imaginative

**ELG**
**My Picture**: Short summary version 2 Example

Summary of Learning and Development for a group of children transferring to an individual school

<table>
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<tr>
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**Just entering Phase**: Red  
**Working securely within phase**: Amber  
**Completed phase (or almost complete)**: Green
Transition to Reception Class:
Good practice notes compiled as part of Cornwall Transition pilot 2008-9

Building Partnerships With Parents
Documents to support transitions
Schools design a variety of booklets to support parents. These include:

- Information booklets
- ‘Starting school’ booklet
- Prospectus
- Transition policy: when writing or reviewing a policy or procedures, seek parents and practitioners views. Transition processes always need to be flexible to meet the needs of particular children and families.
- A ‘Timeline’ of transition processes

The Key Person
Ideally children should have a key person assigned to them before starting in the setting. The key person will then be responsible for meeting with parents and for settling the child and take ongoing responsibility for contact with the parents on a regular basis. An effective key person approach goes a very long way towards reducing parents’ anxiety and stress when leaving a child in a setting. Perhaps even more important is the vital role a key person plays in supporting the child to build secure attachments that are essential both for well-being but also for cognitive development. Other helpful documents are included in the resources section of this booklet for more information.

In Reception classes, the key person will often be the class teacher, but see the guidance leaflet ‘the key person in Reception classes and small nursery settings’.

Home Visits
Home visits can be extremely useful. Parents have a wealth of knowledge about their own child, and we really need to find ways to gather as much of this as we can. Discussions on the parent’s ‘home territory’ tend to be more open than those that take place in school, and this is very useful where there are sensitive issues to discuss. Home visits can take place in June/July, or September, just as the child starts nursery/school. Two members of staff should visit homes together. Practitioners may complete a booklet with the parents at the time of the visit, as in the example in this booklet. Notes used by Camborne Nursery are included in this booklet.

Parents’ Information Sessions
Parents are always reassured if they have a chance to ask any questions and get a feel for the class their child will be starting in. Many schools/ settings use a short presentation including lots of photos of children playing, which they use to outline key points about the EYFS and the class/ setting routines etc.

Staggered Entry
Many schools and settings admit children a few at a time over a couple of weeks so that everyone can get to know each other gradually. One teacher remarked that she always started first the children who she anticipated (from discussion with parents) might have some difficulties, so that staff have more time to spend with them. Another teacher found that staggered entry was difficult for working parents, so agreed that children in those families started first. Many schools found transitions were smoother if children stayed mornings only for a few days, before staying to lunch, then finally attending all day. This might be particularly helpful for children who are very young.

Some settings also stagger the times of day when children start, so that they can be available to meet and greet parents and children.
School Lunches
Lunch time at school tends to be a difficult time for some children and preparation can be helpful eg.
- Parents invited to have a school lunch with children in Summer term
- Careful attention given to how children are supported by adults over lunchtimes (extension of ‘key person’ principle)
- Opportunities to get to know the kitchen staff and lunchtime supervisors

Building partnerships between settings

Meetings Between Practitioners
Adults in the two settings should talk about individual children prior to them moving on, discussing their individual needs, and using the Learning Journey and summative assessment sheet as a prompt for discussion about the child’s next steps.

Some Reception/nursery class teacher(s) told us that they meet pre-school providers from time to time in each other’s settings so that they begin to have a shared understanding of how each of their settings works, and the routines involved. Some pairs of settings meet monthly. In some schools, governors also attend meetings from time to time. This can avoid ‘top-down’ expectations, routines and procedures, or alternatively problems such as pre-school practitioners practising skills which they think children will need as they move on to school, when in fact these skills may not be required (examples given included asking to use the toilet, or ‘lining up’ neither of which are expected in many schools nowadays).

Many schools admit children from a number of different pre-school providers, so it can be very difficult to make links with all of them, and inevitably links will be strongest with settings sending on larger number of children. Teachers need to think about how they will also make links with other setting as well as child-minders, however, as this is very strongly emphasised in the EYFS.

Linking With On-Site Children’s Centres
As well as staff and children getting to know each other, regular meetings at a strategic level may be helpful (head teachers with CC managers) so that both can work towards shared priorities, identified locally.

Teachers sometimes visit during session times to get to know the children who are moving on to them, perhaps leading a story session.

Joint Training
Joint training between pairs of settings can be very useful in breaking down barriers and establishing a shared approach, e.g. to transition, or to teaching letters and sounds. Transition processes are most effective when they are developed by both settings together, based on what is best for the children and what is manageable.

Preparing children for transitions
‘Getting to know you visits’
Pre-school children usually visit the Reception classroom several times before starting. This works best if they are accompanied on some visits by their key person, and on others by parents (HT can take the opportunity to meet parents too).

‘Learning Together’ Sessions
Popular with many schools and settings.
Joint events
Teachers and practitioners recommended:
- Joint weekly singing sessions e.g. With nursery and Reception children. This is a very good chance to ensure that children will have a bank of songs that they will be able to join in with as they move to school.
- Joint outings perhaps in Summer term before transition. Parents encouraged to accompany their children.
- Reception class children invited children from pre-school to come to a ‘tea party’ or picnic.
- Joint story sessions: these can be used to establish a core of well-known stories that children in both settings gradually get to know off by heart.
- A Teddy Bear’s picnic in the woods.

Graduation Ceremony
One teacher told of a ‘Graduation ceremony’ held in school for children who are moving ‘up’ from pre-school. Parents are invited to come.

Shared Spaces
Some settings are able to share spaces for parts of the day, e.g. toddlers use the pre-school room for story time, or shared use of outdoor spaces. In some schools, provision is shared between Reception Class and on-site pre-school for parts of the day.

Specific preparation activities (see also photo pages in section 6)
Displays
Children can make items in Summer term for a display to go up in their new setting. This could be as simple as self portraits. The display will then be up when children start in Autumn, providing a link with the previous setting.

A book of ‘My new school/ setting’
Many settings make such a book, or in some cases an electronic version.

Practitioners’ suggestions included:
- Children (with practitioner) take photos of the new setting on their visits. Practitioner compiles into booklets which children can take home to talk about over the summer.
- Or in some cases, the Reception class children make a book (or simple Powerpoint presentation, e.g. using Tizzy’s first tools) for the children who will be coming up from pre-school.
- Some schools used ‘Tuff cam’ to make a short video.
- Photos would include areas of the setting/ outdoor area as well as the staff.

Here are some more examples of teachers’ and practitioners’ ideas:
- Preschool/ nursery to set up a ‘Treasure Box’ for each child as a talking point for when s/he starts school.
- ‘All about me’ books: See section 2 for an example: settings can adapt and personalise this short booklet.
- Role play area (classroom) set up in pre-school, with school uniforms, self-registration cards etc.
- Learning Journeys: Children can bring these on their visit to setting to talk about with their new key person. Or they can bring to keep in the new setting for a few weeks to look at with their key person.
- Children take their learning journeys with them when they visit their new setting and then these are placed in the book corner to share with adults/other children when they start school.
- Older children sometimes compose letters to send to pre-school children.
Section 6:
Good practice examples, useful resources and case studies
A new home for a tiger: supporting transition to school
St Stephens CP School, Launceston: Barbara Hawke

Barbara Hawke led a highly successful transition programme in her school in Launceston, St Stephen's CP in summer 2009.

Work began when Barbara, the Reception Class teacher, set up regular sessions for leaders from her local (on-site) pre-school, who visited her Reception Class for a half hour session, every Thursday morning after half term in the summer term for singing songs and rhymes.

In mid June, Barbara visited new children in their own setting and shared the children’s Learning Journeys with them. She read a story called A NEW HOME FOR A TIGER and delivered a new little tiger for each child to then personalise with a label and bring to the new school classroom when they visited for a play session at 11.00am -11.50am. Afterwards, the tigers were taken back to playgroup to be kept safe and clean until their next visit.

Towards the end of June, Barbara visited other settings, taking tigers and sharing Learning Journeys with the children who would be coming to St Stephen’s.

Children made ‘homes’ for their tigers out of shoe boxes or similar either at home or in their pre-school setting and brought these when they visited school a week or two later. They were incorporated into a jungle display which was set up just before the end of the Summer term. Barbara took photos of the children with their tigers to send home for the school holiday.

Over the summer break, Barbara wrote to all the children, telling them that their tigers were waiting for them at school and were looking forward to seeing them in September when they started school.

When children started school, they were pleased to be reunited with their tigers, hear the tiger story again, and see the lovely display which they had contributed to.

Their pre-school practitioners came to visit them in school during the first few days of September.
Starting school books
Kate Webber, Lostwithiel Primary School

The children’s ‘starting school’ books are very precious. They are kept on display, and children frequently get them out and look at them with their friends or an adult.
The Caring and Sharing Board
Kristina Waitz, AST the Beacon Infant and Nursery School, Bodmin

The Caring and Sharing board was developed as we were trying various ways to engage with parents. The parents could use them to record their child's achievements at home and we then used these to inform some of our judgements (some with more caution than others!!) We used our wow sheets alongside these as some parents preferred this method.
The Tree of Hope

Kristina Waitz, AST at the Beacon Nursery and Infant School, Bodmin

We used the Tree of Hope at the very start of the year to gain the parents and children’s input into what their hopes were for the school year. The answers gave us an insight into the understanding of each family about school and the early years. Some were very focused on knowing their letters and numbers and some wanted their children to develop their confidence, be happy, make friends etc, so a good indicator of what the year had in store.
CAMBORNE NURSERY SCHOOL

Staff guidance for Home Visits

Why home visit: partnership in learning: parents and school. Confidential meeting at home in familiar situation helps us to know your child and cater for their education needs more effectively.

Explanatory notes:

These points below identify some discussion prompts for staff visiting children's homes. They are not meant to be used in a prescriptive way, but are useful for less experienced members of staff so that they can think about what they would like to share with parents. We find it works better to let the conversation flow freely, but occasionally checking the prompts.

Two members of staff conduct visits together. This is very important for safety of staff, but also it allows one person to talk mainly with the parent while the other plays with the child.

We take with us some toys in a bag to engage the child’s interest and encourage play. We have found that most children respond better to staff as there is something different to encourage them to talk/communicate.

Discussion prompts

Needs of children and school

Parent partnership – working together – should always feel like they know how their child is doing, what they are learning about – parent contributions to learning/interests at home valued – consultations and target setting.

• When this place is offered it is desirable for children to stay at nursery until they move onto reception.
• When child is ill please keep them at home. Please phone nursery as soon as possible. No medication can be given at nursery.
• SEN – possible to arrange a transition plan prior to start dates. Involve/inform other involved professionals.
• Settling child (refer to guidance)
• Time keeping – parents must be reminded to bring/collect on time
• Dress children in suitable easy to manage clothing which allows access to all activities in and out of doors. Please provide named spare clothes to allow changing for whatever reason.
• Outings - Need parent’s support to happen.
• Sharing any skills or interests.
• Saving materials for modelling.

EYFS information

• Classroom information and term planning displayed in both rooms.
• Curriculum workshops throughout the year.
• Library – cost of home/school books (£6 if both lost £3 if 1 lost).
Visual timetable, Jan Philips

King Charles Primary School, Falmouth

A visual timetable can help children understand new routines, supporting anxious parents and helping children settle into school quickly.
Learning Journeys: Promoting Best Practice

Introduction

Most Cornish schools and pre-school providers now complete a Learning Journey as their key method of documenting children's learning. This practice is recognised and recommended in Cornwall as the most effective means of ensuring children make good progress.

Although there is no statutory requirement to complete a Learning Journey, where schools/settings choose not to do so, Ofsted would expect them to demonstrate that they use an equally effective method of documenting their observations and assessments of children and demonstrating their progress.

The following guidance has been prepared to support practitioners:

- Every Learning Journey is unique and tells the story of each child's learning and development over time
- Learning Journeys provide a record of significant moments in a child's learning and development across all areas of learning
- Learning Journals provide a focus for sharing and discussing observations and stages of development with parents and with others who share the child's EYFS provision (eg where children attend more than one setting/childminder)
- Learning Journeys support children's transitions as they move from one setting to another and should be shared
- Learning Journeys should include children, parents and carers ‘voices’ so that all are involved in the ongoing observation and assessment process

‘On going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Providers must ensure that practitioners are observing children and responding appropriately to help them make progress from birth towards the early learning goals’

EYFS Statutory Framework

‘When making summary judgements for the profile, practitioners need to ensure that not more than 20% of the total evidence for each scale point is gained from adult-led activity. The remainder of the evidence should be drawn from knowledge of the child, observations and anecdotal assessments’

Page 10 of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook
What Learning Journeys should include:

Essential

- All evidence dated and linked to Development Matters / Profile Scale points
- Indication of whether the evidence is taken from child-initiated or adult-directed activities
- Spontaneous/incidental observations, eg labels or post-its
- Photographs with annotation to describe the child’s significant step, linked to EYFS profile scale points or Development Matters
- Longer planned observations (aim for one per half term per child) which include next steps for the child. ‘Next steps’ to be specific to inform planning
- Verbatim quotes from the child wherever possible (what the child actually said) as they participate in activities
- Parental contributions/comments eg ‘WOW’ moment stickers
- Evidence of the child’s contribution to the Learning Journey and a genuine ownership by the child
- Contributions from all adults who work with the child
- A range of children’s ‘work’/outcomes across all areas of learning
- Observations / evidence from both indoors and outdoors in appropriate proportions
- A summative record completed each half term (or minimum each term in pre-school settings) – but see below, this may be kept in a separate place

Desirable

- Information sheet explaining the purpose and rationale behind Learning Journals (see later section)
- ‘All About Me’ sheet completed by parents/carers prior to the child starting school
- Comments from children as they reflect on their learning with an adult
- In reception classes, Profile Scale summary sheet which may be highlighted in a different colour each half term in order to show progress (this may be recorded and kept separately eg using the E-profile)
- Evidence from home eg certificates, family trips etc
The following is taken from the sample Learning Journey included on the EYFS CD ROM / online resources. You may like to adapt to make your own information page for parents

Information for parents and carers

Your child’s Learning Journey

Your child’s Learning Journey book celebrates his/her experiences. Over time it will tell a story about your child – his / her learning, friends and the activities he / she enjoys sharing with others.

Staff watch and notice each child at play because it helps us to understand and support their individual well-being and development. We really get to know the children as unique people with special skills, interests and ideas. The more we understand about your special child, the better we can support them in the way that is right for them.

The child’s key person and family work together. We value parents and carers taking the profile book home and sharing in their child’s learning. We welcome you talking with your child about the book, sticking in family photographs or other things of significance for your child. You and your child can also take the book to any other settings or important people to share or add to.

Please feel welcome to join us in watching out for and noting new things. So much happens so quickly! When you tell us about your child a clearer picture unfolds and together we can plan more effectively to help the learning on. We can share pleasure and excitement in their learning.

We will regularly look through the book with your child to remind us of happy times, providing a starting point for talk about shared memories. When children are ready, they can also choose to put things that are important to them in their book.

Though it is mainly kept here it belongs to you and your child
The Learning Journey profile book will include:

**Photographs**
These capture moments and sequences of your child’s activity, their interests and explorations. You can add some of your own from home. Sometimes we will write down exactly what your child says about the photographs, so we know your child’s point of view. This is also an accurate record of language development.

**Observations**
These are quick notes of significant moments we notice in your child’s learning

**Your child’s creations**
These could be photos of models, photos of their role-play, marks they have made, art-making – with an observation to explain what your child did or said.

**Learning story episodes**
These special detailed observations give snapshots of learning that the children have initiated themselves, and adults go on to think about the learning and how to respond specifically to the child’s way of thinking and doing things.

Further guidance can be found in the following places:
- EYFS CD rom included in the EYFS materials pack NB effective practice ‘in depth’ information in 3.1 Observation assessment and planning
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile handbook www.qcda.gov.uk
- Engaging Parents and Children in EYFS Profile Assessment at www.qcda.gov.uk

For further information about the contents of this document please contact Christine Barnes, Cornwall Learning EYFS specialist.

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E: cbarnes@cornwall.gov.uk
Case Study 1:
Summerrcourt School

At the beginning of the school year, we completed an audit of our existing Early Years provision. Transition was highlighted as an area for development. As a team we met and decided that we would like to re-introduce Home Visits and develop our Learning Together programme intended to give the children a feel for their new setting and key workers. We timetabled structured events and parent meetings over a five week period, as well as offering weekly P.E. sessions during the summer term to the on-site nursery children.

Our ‘Learning Together’ sessions ran for four weeks in school. These sessions were designed to give the children time to have a play with new toys and classmates, get to know the class teachers and teaching assistants and to borrow games and toys to take home each week. They were also an opportunity for parents to come and play alongside their children, get to know staff and other parents and talk through any concerns or questions they may have had. We encouraged parents to stay during the first two sessions. During the third session, we wanted to increase the children’s independence slightly and so we held an Induction Meeting for new parents whilst the children played. We talked through the practicalities of school life; uniform, school dinners, the introduction of reading and writing skills, etc and gave parents an opportunity to talk through any concerns.

By the fourth session, the children were happy to come into the setting independently and stay for lunch and a play with their new classmates. The Learning Together sessions proved to be invaluable in developing the confidence and enthusiasm of the new children, as well as reassuring parents that their children were comfortable and excited about the future changes.

Home Visits took place mid-way through our in-school Learning Together sessions. Meeting with parents and children in an informal environment where they felt safe and secure gave us an opportunity to really get to know each child and their parents individually.

We took the class monkey along as an ‘ice-breaker’ and encouraged the children to have favourite books and toys to share with us. It also provided us with an opportunity to meet siblings or pets! Feedback from our visits confirmed that parents were pleased to have a chance to meet with us and talk about their child in detail. We found it incredibly useful for both of the EYFS Teachers to carry out the Home Visits together. This meant that we ensured continuity and consistency and whilst one teacher talked with the parents, the other was able to fully engage with the child; chatting and sharing toys and books. Two parents, who were unable to facilitate home visits, requested that their children be visited at their Nursery setting.

In addition to Learning Together sessions and Home Visits, there were several optional whole-school events that we opened up to the new in-take. We welcomed children to our Sports’ Day, the school production and an Open Day.

Finally, as the summer term drew to a close, we met with all pre-school providers to receive information on the children and collect any data and records that had been collated. Again, this proved invaluable in being able to gain a complete picture of each child starting school in
September. The links with our pre-school providers remain open to discuss issues arising during those first few months whilst the children settle to school life.

Over the summer holidays we will be sending a ‘Starting School’ pack home. Included in the pack will be a booklet for parents and children to share together (with optional activities to complete) and a letter from our class monkey asking the children to bring an ‘All About Me’ box in September. We hope that this will provide an opportunity for the children to share information about themselves with their classmates, further easing the transition process.

In September, at the end of the first week, we will hold a celebration event for all new children and their classmates. A Teddy Bear’s Picnic will be open to children, parents, siblings and grandparents. This will be another chance for families to further familiarise themselves with the school setting and staff. A final ‘Welcome’ meeting will be held during the first two weeks of the Autumn Term. Hopefully, this will further consolidate the transition process which believe has been a great success.
Case Study 2: Pennoweth Nursery, Flying Start and Curnow School

Initially the transition pilot involved working with a pre school in addition to Flying Start day nursery. Historically its children fed through to Pennoweth School. Unfortunately due to falling numbers the Pre School closed at Christmas.

A meeting was arranged between the Foundation Stage teacher at Pennoweth nursery, the manager at Flying Start and the Children’s Centre teacher to identify ways in which we might ease transition between the settings to enable the children to meet up and become familiar with each other. We were mindful of the various routines children might meet as they moved between settings and as both settings were developing their outdoor learning environments decided to start there.

We decided that exploring one another’s outdoor space would present more relaxing opportunities for the children to get to know each other in small groups. I approached Sandie Hawkey from Kernow Woodland learning based at the CPR Success Zone to help deliver training to staff across the settings and also outdoor learning experiences with the children. Staff across the foundation stages enjoyed getting together in February for the practical workshop held at Redruth Children’s Centre and later on in Tehidy woods.

Links between the school nursery and Flying Start were already strong as children are regularly collected at lunchtime and for the After School club. One of the Teaching Assistants was also a previous practitioner at Flying Start.

With these current links we were able to identify two children who were attending Pennoweth Nursery in the mornings and Flying Start in the afternoons. It was difficult to identify if there were other children who were due to start at Pennoweth foundation stage as:

- Parents had not informed Flying Start of their choice of school.
- At this stage of the pilot (February) the reception list from County had not been sent out to schools.
- The manager at Flying Start suffered a serious illness and although initially attended the pilot was absent soon after and has now resigned.

A further difficulty became apparent as we tried to arrange our outdoor experiences as there wasn’t a common day when all the children were attending. Also a child who was available was ill on that day!! Fortunately the nursery children at Curnow School have been accessing facilities at Flying Start nursery on a weekly basis as part of integration. It is hoped that one of the children will be able to access mainstream education and the parents have chosen Pennoweth School. I invited Emily, Nursery teacher, to join our pilot and to bring him along with his friend to be involved in the transition. We enjoyed a ‘Forest School’ experience with Sandie.
in an outdoor area at Pennoweth School and Ann included some of her children from her current nursery class who would particularly benefit from this.

Two children who currently attend both settings will transfer to Pennoweth reception class in September 09. Ann has discussed the transition proforma with the reception teacher and plans to trial this in July.

I discussed with the temporary manager at Flying Start, how we could find out if there were other children who might be going to Pennoweth nursery. She suggested it could be mentioned in their newsletter asking parents to let her know.

From the County list received at the end of March we also knew of a family who are currently accessing Flying Start who have applied for their children to attend Pennoweth. Their eldest child will be transferring to the reception class in September and the younger into the nursery.

The nursery teacher from Pennoweth brought two children with her to Flying start to share their ‘Starting Nursery’ photo album. She will also need to visit on Fridays when another child attends. Further visits are planned to enable the children to visit Pennoweth nursery to meet other children who will still be there in September. We also plan to involve the parents by inviting them to join us in a celebration along with Sandie Hawkey in the outdoor environment at Tehidy Woods. I have discussed this with the parents and have identified a suitable day when they are available.

**Outcomes**

- Better understanding of the different transitions children go through and ways in which we can help.
- Clearer understanding of difficulties involved for day nurseries in making transitions workable due to staffing ratios, children attending different sessions and days and children transferring to more than one feeder school.
- More information required earlier for the Day nursery from parents in order to know of their school of choice.
- We agreed the need to be solution-focused so that we would not allow barriers to impede the process.
Case Study 3: Devoran School Foundation Stage Class (Sarah Johns)

In the Summer Term of 2009 I took part in and eventually led the weekly ‘Learning Together’ sessions for pupils who started in September 2009. I felt this weekly gathering was extremely valuable to get to know the children and the parents, as starting school is an immensely important and sometimes worrying part of growing up, for both the children and parents.

In July 2009, I visited the pre-schools of the entrants to see them in their own settings and to speak to their Key Person and other members of staff. The discussions I had, the notes I made and the paperwork I received gave me a very good picture of each individual child, which supported my planning as I catered it around their interests. It was also very helpful to know strategies used, such as behaviour, to ensure consistency when the children started school.

In relation to the children, I think it gave them a great deal of confidence having me in their setting as they had the opportunity to show me around, talk about their favourite toys, games and activities and more importantly, talk to me on a one-to-one basis.

I think the communication has improved this year, due to the great amount of communication and visits last year. It has given me the confidence to approach the local pre-school more freely about coming to school for Christingle, dates for starting Learning Together in the Spring Term and so on.

When referring back to the previous year’s baseline assessment using the Foundation Stage Profile, it is evident that this years cohort have achieved higher in PSED and CLL, particularly in LCT. I believe this is due to the greater confidence of the children when starting school as they not only knew the school but they also knew their teacher and support staff in the classroom. Additionally, I feel the confidence of the parents, which was heightened by the Learning Together sessions and July 2009 Parents Meetings, reflected in the pupils when coming to school.

I continue to refer to my notes and the paperwork received from the pre-schools about each individual pupil to answer any concerns arising and to see how children are progressing.

For the improvements in the baseline assessments to continue, Learning Together is starting in Spring Term 2010 for the 2010 cohort; July pre-school visits will continue, and a Teddy Bear’s picnic on the school grounds will take place in the Summer Term.
Case Study 4:
Kennall Vale School – A research project for Transition (Hattie Hughes)

I intend to look at how we can make the link between pre-school and reception most effective. A lot of research has gone into the transition between KS1 and KS2 and the transition from primary school to secondary school and with this wider school focus I would like to examine the links between pre-school and primary school to develop an all-round network of support for children and parents throughout our school.

I am hoping to involve parents of new reception children and the staff at the pre-school they attend so that I have a good understand of the children before they join Kennall Vale and the children have contact with me as their class teacher a long time before they attend the school. I propose to do this in a number of ways. Firstly I would arrange regular sessions throughout the school year where I visit children at pre-school or at home to establish contact and start to develop an understanding of their abilities and needs. This would ensure the future reception pupils have constant contact with their new teacher. I would also liaise with parents to answer questions and be a supporting link to school.

I would like to give each parent a questionnaire about their child, not asking questions about their child’s academic ability, in order to establish a basic idea of their child needs, social groups, likes and dislikes. All this information should provide a good understanding of each new reception child and ease the transition between pre-school and primary school.

Background to project

With the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) this year, which follows the progress of children from birth to the end of the Reception year, the link with pre-school and primary school has never been so important. Every child develops at a different pace and this has been accounted for in the EYFS. The phases of development overlap in order to fit in with the development of a child and thus the phase ‘30-50 months’ and the ‘40-60 months’ are interlinked. As a reception teacher this means that every child joining my class in September will be working at a different level and by having a strong link with the pre-school and parents I would be able to ensure the needs of the children as defined by the EYFS are more effectively met.

One of the four main principles of the EYFS is ‘Positive Relationships’. “Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or key person”. By developing a link with the children and their parents before they enter school this relationship can be established.

Another principle involves learning and developing, “Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.” By being involved with the children in their pre-school setting I would be able to establish where children are with their learning much earlier on and thus plan most effectively to meet their needs.

Methodology

As it is coming to the end of the school year I plan to begin my project from September 2008. I have spoken to the leader of the pre-school and she is happy for me to do this research. In order to assess the outcomes of the research I need to gain an understanding of how the transition from pre-school to Kennall Vale is currently viewed by parents, children and staff. I will write a questionnaire for all parents and staff asking for their opinions on the process and will speak to each of the children in turn. With this information I will be able to assess how successful the project has been with a follow up questionnaire next year.
From September I will visit the pre-school every half term to meet the children and start to establish their needs, social skills and academic ability based on the EYFS learning goals. I will talk with the parents and answer any questions.

Each year class 1 visits the pre-school to watch the Christmas play and in turn they come down to school and watch ours. I would like to establish this link further and invite the children coming into reception next year to class for an afternoon in the autumn and spring term. I will invite their parents to stay and so both the children and the parents experience the class, its layout and resources and thus aid the transition process the following year.

I am aware that, although the majority of children coming into Kennall Vale next year attend the pre-school in the village, some children do not. I will arrange home visits for the children that do not attend pre-school and I will invite them to our class at the same time.

In the summer term I will visit twice each half term. On these occasions I will take group sessions with the children so they are aware of me in a ‘teaching’ role. On the final two sessions I will bring some reception children with me so they can see children in the uniform and meet some of the children they will be in school with.

At the end of the summer term I will hold three afternoon sessions where the new reception children will come into school and experience ‘school life’. They will meet my TA and the other members of staff and also their ‘buddy’. I will choose a child already in reception to look after them, show them around the classroom and be their as a support. This will also give the children in my class a sense of responsibility and a chance to meet the new children. Parents will be able to speak to me, the Head teacher and our early years governor.

At the end of this time I will give the parents a questionnaire about the needs of their child as well as friendship groups and likes/dislikes in order to help me meet their needs in my class. I will also re-issue the same questionnaire as I gave last year in order to assess the success of my project.

**Impact/Success criteria**

There would be a change in the planning of the curriculum – the planning would ensure that the needs of each child were met on an individual basis from their first day in school. Following the principles of the EYFS ‘Unique Child’, plans would be centred around the children not around the curriculum areas.

This project is not specifically aimed at getting more children to attend Kennall Vale in Reception. However ‘word of mouth’ of good practise may mean an increased number of children. There will be more parental involvement before their children start at school. This is beneficial in a number of ways. The parents will be familiar with the school, its philosophy, policies, rules and staff. Any potential problems with any of these could be dealt with immediately and effectively. Also parental involvement with the school at this early stage means they are also introduced to the PTA and Friends of Kennall Vale who will encourage them to join thus helping them to feel more a part of the school community.

The children will be happier as they will be confident and secure in their surroundings when finally entering the school. Knowing the school layout, the staff and even the children at the school already will help this. I will expect the children to achieve better scores on the Foundation Stage Profile. Having knowledge of the children’s abilities and social skills long before they enter the school and being able to review their learning and development at stages throughout until they finally enter Kennall Vale means that I can plan effectively and efficiently for each individual child. With this individualized planning I expect the children to get higher results than in previous years.
Ofsted Guidance on judging attainment and progress

Ofsted Guidance on judging attainment and progress

Taken from Subsidiary guidance: Supporting the inspection of maintained schools and academies from January 2012, Ofsted

Judging attainment on entry to nursery and reception

1. There are no national data on attainment on entry available for comparison. Instead, inspectors should make a professional judgment by taking account of the proportions of children meeting expectations in the age-related bands in development matters. Remember to avoid using the term ‘average’ and ‘standards’ as there is no ‘national average’ for three- and four-year-olds on entry to nursery and reception.

2. If a substantial number of new children enter the school in reception or leave after nursery, establish attainment on entry to reception as well as to nursery. Also take into account children who enter reception part-way through the year. If many children enter reception without pre-school experience, this might mean that attainment on entry at this point is lower than, or similar to, the attainment on entry to nursery. Check arrangements for ‘staggered entry’ and part- and full-time attendance, as the amount of time spent in school may affect both attainment and progress.

Attainment on entry to nursery at age three

3. Most children are likely to be working within the development matters band for 30–50 months, having shown competence in the preceding band for 22–36 months. This may be referred to as the age-related expectation at the beginning of nursery. Consider this guidance for all six areas of learning when judging attainment on entry to nursery, taking into account children’s ages on entry. Attainment on entry is likely to be below age-related expectations where a substantial proportion of children in a school do not demonstrate all of the elements in the 22–36 month band.

Attainment on entry to reception at age four

4. Most children are likely to demonstrate some of the elements of skill, knowledge and understanding within the development matters band for 40–60+ months, in addition to all of the elements in the preceding band for 30–50 months. This may be referred to as the age-related expectation at the beginning of reception. Consider all six areas of learning when judging attainment on entry to reception, taking into account children’s ages on entry. Attainment on entry is likely to be below age-related expectations where a substantial proportion of children in a school do not demonstrate all of the elements in the 30–50 month band. The statutory early learning goals establish national expectations for most children to reach by the end of Reception Year. These are the statements in bold in the 40–60+ month band.

Attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage/entry to Year 1

5. Compare school data with national results, rather than local, to evaluate attainment. Take into account all six areas of learning. Check how many children score six in all of the personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy scales. This indicates children working at a good level of development. Then check the data against the proportion of children scoring six or more in each of the assessment scales. Results very close to the national figures are likely to be described as broadly average. If results in any area fall below, but not close to, national figures, it is unlikely that attainment would be judged to be above average.
6. In small schools, the attainment of different cohorts may vary greatly. Take this into account in evaluating current standards attained, clarifying differences in the report. If accuracy of judgment or the quality of records are inspection issues, it may be helpful to check work or observe and talk to children jointly with a member of staff to inform the achievement judgement.

**Judging progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

7. Progress from the age-related expectations at the beginning of nursery, to the age-related expectations at the beginning of reception, on to the end of reception where they can be compared with Early Years Foundation Stage Profile national figures is likely to represent expected progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Collecting and managing information

Gathering Information

- How do you ensure observations of day-to-day activity in a range of situations?
- How do you involve parents, children, and other professionals?
- What information is important, and shows the unique child?
- How do you ensure recording systems are manageable?
- How do you support staff to reflect on observations to understand individual children?
- How is understanding the child’s needs and development used to support progress?

Summarising Information

- How do you record summaries?
- How do you summarise a child's learning and development?
- How do you ensure summaries show a holistic view of all areas of learning and development?
- How do you quality-assure summary assessments?
- How do you show progress?
- How will you track?
- What is the starting point?

Supporting children’s progress

- How do you ensure recordings are manageable?
- How do you support staff to reflect on observations to understand individual children?
- How is understanding the child’s needs and development used to support progress?
- How do you ensure summaries show a holistic view of all areas of learning and development?
- How do you quality-assure summary assessments?
- How do you show progress?
- How will you track?
- What is the starting point?

Using Information

- How do you analyse progress for specific groups of children?
- How do you analyse progress in all areas of learning?
- What other information about the children might you need to consider in order to understand their progress and needs?
- How do you identify and act on any gaps in your provision—practice, resources, organisation, environment?
- How do you use the information to support transitions?
- How do you share progress summaries with parents?
WHAT IS THE DATA FOR?
- Identify strengths and points for improvement in EYFS provision.
- Inform school / setting improvement planning.
- Compare achievement for different groups, e.g., gender, ethnicity, EAL.
- Ensure the provision is responsive to children's needs as they move on.
- Support performance management.

WHAT ANALYSIS NEEDS TO BE MADE?

Are children as a group making progress over time?
- NO
- YES

Is the level of learning and development in line with neighbouring areas / national levels?
- NO
- YES

Are there particular children who are falling behind the age / stage expectations in one or more areas?
- NO
- YES

Are there children whose learning and development is beyond age/stage expectations?
- NO
- YES

Are children generally making more progress in some areas of learning than others - are there gaps?
- NO
- YES

WHAT ACTION MIGHT FOLLOW?

Do practitioners have sufficient understanding and skills in supporting children's learning?

Does the physical environment support learning?

Do staff have appropriate expectations for children's learning?

Are there factors that might be involved? (e.g., ratio of boys to girls, ethnicity, EAL?)

Are there factors in common for children who are making slower progress - can you identify a group?

Are there SENs which have not been identified or effectively responded to?

Are staff aware of the needs and abilities of all children?

Is there sufficient and challenge to support rapid progress for these children?

Do staff have sufficient knowledge, and give attention to, all areas of learning?

Does the learning environment offer rich opportunities across all areas of learning?

Plan for team and individual CPD in improvement plan and performance management.

Raise qualifications of staff leading practice.

Develop indoor and outdoor provision with appropriate resources.

Identify and implement strategies to meet the children's needs.

Obtain support from partner professionals: ensure SEN support systems are robust and practitioners supported to meet individual needs.

Review and develop observational assessment and responsive planning.

Arrange CPD on identified areas of learning.

Review routines and planning.

Develop indoor and outdoor provision, replace resources.
Attachment and the Key Person Role

The first few months of a baby’s life are important for the development of attachment. “Time spent together is crucial for a parent to tune into a baby’s non-verbal signals and to feel that a personal relationship is growing through smiles, gurgles, long stares and pre-verbal exchanges of sound.” Lindon (1998)

For babies who spend much of their early life in out of home settings, the relationship between a baby and a key person or persons in that setting is especially significant.

Selleck (2001) points to a growing body of literature which emphasises the importance of a continuing attachment relationship which links between key persons/practitioners who care for, play with and educate children in settings outside their homes in close association with children’s significant attachment figures from home. She argues that “in the beginning, only the presence of a parent (or committed regular key person in the nursery) can provide the continuity, attention and sensuous pleasure the baby needs to make sense of all his or her experiences and set in motion the process of mental development”.

Familiarity, pattern and predictability give older babies a sense of being themselves. Continuity of attention from key people who know children well, who are interpreting and responding to their gestures and cues enable children to attend to their inclinations and to play freely. From the substantial continuity of regular contact with a few familiar people, toddlers may enjoy an increasing range of relationships and activities.” Rustin et al (1997)

In relation to nursery settings, the National Standards describe key persons as “providing a vital link with parents and carers and crucial in settling children into the setting”. Ofsted (2001) The key person approach has been described as: “A way of working in nurseries in which the whole focus and organisation is to enable and support close attachments between individual children and individual nursery staff.” “The key person approach is an involvement, an individual and reciprocal commitment between a member of staff and a family. It is an approach which has clear benefits for children and parents, the key person and the nursery.” Elfer, Goldschmied and Selleck (2002)

Selleck (2001) describes these clear benefits as follows:

- **For the baby or young child**
  The key person(s) makes sure that, within the day to day demands of a nursery each child feels special and individual, cherished and thought about by someone in particular while they are away from home. It is as if she or he were ‘camped out in the key person’s mind’ or that there is an elastic thread of attachment which allows for being apart as well as for being together. The child will experience a close relationship which is affectionate and reliable in the nursery as well as at home.

- **For parents, particularly mothers**
  The key person(s) approach ensures having the opportunity to build a personal relationship with ‘someone’ rather than ‘all of them’ in the nursery. The benefits are likely to be peace of mind, and the possibility of building a partnership with professional staff who may share with you the pleasures and stresses of child rearing. It is liaising with someone else who loves your baby or child too.
For the key Person
The key person approach is intense, hard work and a big commitment. This relationship makes very real physical, intellectual and emotional demands upon the key person which need to be understood, planned for and supported by the nursery policies and management. The benefits in being and becoming a key person are feelings that you really matter to a child and to their family. You are likely to have a powerful impact on the child’s well being, their mental health, and their chances to think and learn. These powers and responsibilities will touch on feelings of pleasure and pain, the joys and reliefs of partings and reunions and the satisfactions and anxieties of being key people in a child’s formative early years care and education.

For the Nursery
The key person approach also has benefits for the nursery as an organisation with more satisfied and engaged staff, better care and learning for the children, and a parent clientele who are likely to develop a more trusting confidence in the competencies, qualities and devotion of professional staff. There are indications that this approach reduces staff sickness, absence and develops involvement and positive attitudes to professional development within staff teams.

NOTE: A ‘key person’, not a ‘key worker’
The terms ‘key worker’ and ‘key person’ are often used interchangeably in nurseries as well as in other areas of social care for example in hospitals or in work with people with mental or physical disabilities. Elfer, Goldschmied and Selleck draw a clear distinction between the two terms. A ‘key worker’ is often used to describe a role that is about liaison or co-ordinating between different professionals or between different disciplines, making sure that services work in a co-ordinated way. It is quite different from the ‘key person’ role which has been defined above. The term ‘key worker’ is also used to describe how staff work strategically in nurseries to enhance smooth organisation and record keeping. This is only a part of being a key person, which is an emotional relationship as well as organisational strategy.

The importance of the key person in the lives of babies and young children is outlined by Rosie Roberts, former Director of PEEP.

She asks the following question:

Are you a specialist?
Every parent is a specialist, in relation to his or her own child. And every worker in early childhood education and care is also a specialist, in child development. The best possible start that babies and young children can have is when these two specialists come together to share their knowledge and experience and understanding with each other.

Being important people
Before birth, babies are literally attached to their mothers. After birth this very important attachment mostly continues although they are physically separate. Soon other people become important too – dads, and perhaps siblings and grandparents. These first relationships continue to be especially important whether children start to move between home and the wider world at three months or three years, or any time in between. But spending time in a setting means that babies and young children will have new important people as well. This is very good for them, as long as they can start with a ‘special’ person who knows all about them and is usually around. They need their ‘specialists’ to be in regular communication!
Feeling safe
Babies and young children need time to make special relationships and build up trust, just like adults. These special relationships make vital foundations for babies’ and young children’s development: their mental and physical health, and their ability to wonder, think and learn. At home they can grow naturally, day after day, week after week, year after year. In nurseries, the main way to help these relationships to grow is to have a key person approach (described by Elfer et al 2002). Each family is given a key person at nursery who gets to know them well, and this helps everyone to feel safe. A baby or young child knows that this special person and your important people at home often do the same things for you.

• They help you manage through the day
• They think about you
• They get to know you well
• They sometimes worry about you
• They get to know each other
• They talk about you

Looking through the framework
This framework shows four aspects of babies’ and young children’s development: inner strength, skilful communication, competent learning, and physical and mental health. Within these aspects are the elements that make up this picture of the youngest children. Each of these elements is a different piece of the jigsaw that makes up each child’s full potential. But each of these elements will only flourish in the context of special relationships. All this development can happen wherever the child is – sometimes at home, sometimes in other places, as long as the child feels secure. The framework itself offers many ways for helping special relationships to grow, as well as including other sources of information, ideas and support. (See CD ROM)

When babies and young children have this security, life becomes easier for everybody… and their strength, skill, competence and health can thrive and develop.

References


Elfer, P. (2002) Attachment and the Key Person Role
Other Services
- Forms for additional services will be available e.g. Breakfast Club
- Other services for families in SureStart Building
- Complaints procedure
- Role of Governing Body

Child Safety
- Child must be picked up by named people only
- Share information – change of address, involvement of other professionals
- Front door – safety when leaving
  Parental Responsibility - fathers.
  - There is no parking for parents within the school grounds.

Parent queries
Refer to hand book or ensure them you will find out information for when you next meet
Guidance: the key person in reception classes and small nursery settings

Julian Grenier, Peter Elfer, Julia Manning Morton, Dilys Wilson and Katie Dearnley

Introduction

Theme: Positive Relationships

Principle: Children learn to be independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

The new Early Years Foundation Stage is bringing in an important new requirement from September 2008: each child in a nursery setting or reception class should be 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)
- the person who acts as a point of contact with parents.

In a large, free-flowing nursery setting, this is important because otherwise children can be cared for indiscriminately by ten or even more adults, without developing a particular relationship with anyone. Considerable research indicates that the outcomes for children in settings like these are not good: it is a system of group care that can lead to anxiety, aggression or withdrawn behaviour.

In a smaller nursery or reception class, children do not have to cope with so many different adults. But it will be helpful to think about certain points of the day, like lunchtime: are the children in the EYFS assigned to the care of specific adults at times like these? How is the transition managed? Who gives children extra help if they need it at times of transition like this?
Other elements to consider (which are part of the key person approach in smaller nursery settings and reception classes) are:

- how do parents and carers work with staff during the settling-in period?
- how do staff make sure that children feel secure when the time comes to say goodbye and stay in the nursery or reception class without the parent or carer?
- how are care routines like toileting, getting dressed or changed, eating, resting or sleeping managed for children so that they feel personalised, not institutional and uncaring
- how are children comforted when they feel distressed or tired?
- if children's behaviour is challenging, how do you ensure that a limited number of staff who have a trusting relationship with child manage difficult incidents?

In the rest of this document, we have tried to summarise some of the important aspects of the key person approach. There is more information and guidance on the EYFS DVD and website. We think it is useful for practitioners to consider the principles and rationale behind the approach and how these can best be put into practice in each nursery setting or reception class. We think it is important that staff discuss and think about this and use professional judgment, rather than try to follow a single prescription.

**Why have a key person?**

Can you remember or imagine what it is like to be at a party or an important meeting where you don't know anyone, or travelling alone in unfamiliar city, how comforting and reassuring it is if the party host, chair of the meeting or travel guide, introduces you to people you can join with, explains what the agenda is or shows you where the important places are. It is helpful to us all, when in a strange situation, to have someone we can rely on to interpret unfamiliar experiences for us until we feel confident to manage the situation on our own. Even then, if we feel unwell, unsure or overwhelmed, knowing that there is someone there whom we can ask for help if necessary, is reassuring and can enable us to tackle something on our own that we might otherwise avoid.

This is what key people do for their allocated group of children. Young children need to know that someone in particular keeps them 'in mind' while they are away from their parents. When they have someone who gets to know them well and supports them with in interacting with others, their confidence and well-being is supported.

**What does having a key person mean for children?**

As adults, we value the people we are close to in our lives because they understand us well, accept our good and bad sides and give us their time and attention when we need it. Young children also need familiar and trusting relationships in order for them to develop emotional well-being.

The people we feel close to are the people we may feel most anxious about losing. They are also the people with whom we can express our feelings. Therefore young children may show their need to feel secure through clinging to their parent or key person and being uncooperative with people they do not know well. They may protest when their parent or key person leaves them and show their distress by rejecting comfort or distraction, becoming aggressive or defiant or withdrawing and not engaging in activities. Though difficult to manage, these are ordinary ways in which children respond to separation and anxiety. In these situations,
children benefit from having a key person who can accept their emotions and respond with understanding.

This does not mean condoning negative or anti-social behaviours but by acknowledging the feelings that may underlie such behaviours such as anger, anxiety, distress or jealousy gives children the message that we empathise with their difficulties even when we do not approve of their method of expressing them. Providing vocabulary for feelings will support children to become aware of their emotions.

By adopting a key person approach that emphasises the centrality of ‘loving and secure relationships’ to their practice (EYFS 2007), practitioners are supporting children to feel good about themselves and be confident. When children feel like this, they are more likely to be able to engage in more complex and creative play, freely access a broad curriculum and take risks in their learning through guessing, experimenting and making mistakes.

**Being tuned in**

The key to effective early years practice is knowing the children in your group really well. This enables you to start with what the children already know and are interested in rather than what you think they should be taught. Deep knowledge and understanding of individual children comes from spending time with your key children at play, good information sharing with parents and close and regular observation. Therefore effective implementation of the Key Person Approach includes observing your key children regularly and analysing the information to both increase your understanding of the children and also to provide evidence for the records of your key children's developmental progress. Learning what your key children's conversations, play and behaviours mean will enable you to better understand the connections they are making in their learning and to engage in sustained shared thinking (EYFS, Learning and Development: Creativity and Critical Thinking).

**Being available and responsive**

Young children understand much by observing our body language and facial expressions and will interpret these according to their previous experience, sometimes in ways that we do not intend. Therefore it is important that we make it clear to children that we are available to support them through what we do as well as what we say.

By sitting at the children’s level and being involved in their play, you will show that you are available to them to come to as they need and, especially for new children, by drawing their attention to interesting things around them and smiling and nodding as they explore you will support their explorations and independence, thereby providing a secure base. It is often tempting to move away from an activity once children are ‘settled’ but for new children or children who find peer interactions challenging, this can be very disruptive so practitioners need to be sensitive to when their presence and involvement in play is necessary.

**Being consistent**

In small nursery and reception classes, where there are two members of staff working as a close team, there are good opportunities for children to experience consistent interactions and expectations. This kind of experience is important for children moving between the worlds of home and school where the environment and routine is very different.

All children benefit from the emotional security that familiarity of people, places and experience brings. This can often be overlooked in the organisation of play and lunchtime sessions, when suddenly children are expected to engage in very different routine activities with a different group of staff. Such changes in familiarity and routine can raise the stress
Levels of all children, though most will be able to use their existing emotional and social skills to adapt quickly to new situations. For some children such as those with additional emotional, social or learning needs, or who are newly arrived in the community and learning English as an additional language, the stress caused by frequent changes of practitioner (such as playtime, lunchtime, PE), may result in either distress or negative behaviour. Thought needs to be given to the organisation of these times so that children are given time to become gradually familiar with all the relevant practitioners, the routines and the environment over an extended period of time.

Liaising with parents

To support children’s sense of well-being and belonging, practitioners need to develop close working partnerships with parents in which there is mutual respect and trust. By learning about and understanding each family’s customs, the practitioner can extend their knowledge of the individual child to provide effective care and learning opportunities. This means sharing information about children’s:

- emotional needs, for example, any fears or worries the child has
- physical needs, for example, the degree to which the child can dress and use the toilet independently
- language and cultural heritage: can the practitioner use important words in each child’s home language and are they knowledgeable about significant events in the child’s cultural and religious life?

It is important to spend time with your key children’s parents regularly, sharing observations and information and gathering ideas for future plans.

Settling in

Starting at nursery or school can be stressful for children. They are in a strange and perhaps overwhelming environment, meeting several new children and adults, encountering unfamiliar toys and experiences, and then the person they rely on most leaves them. Settling new children into a setting successfully, with minimum distress is probably one of the most skillful and challenging things a practitioner does. It can be a fraught time for parents and children. For practitioners too, memories of their own separations and losses in life make this an emotionally charged time. For all these reasons, it can be tempting to cut short or even dispense with settling-in times. Whilst some children might cope with the sudden loss of their parent or carer in this way, others may not. They may be damaged by the experience.

An effective settling-in system gives parents, children and practitioners sufficient time to get to know each other well before children are separated from their parents. An agreed settling in policy might include:

- advance planning of admissions
- home or initial visits
- periods of time when parents support children as they get used to the nursery or reception class
- special planning for the first day
- ways of supporting children and parents at the point of parting, and reuniting
- guidance for parents on ways to help children at times of change.
Dilemmas

The key person approach is not simple to implement. Sometimes dilemmas arise. As with all good early years practice, the best way to address these dilemmas is through observation and discussion, and making a professional judgment.

In order to be able to respond sensitively to children's feelings, practitioners need to be sufficiently open emotionally to be able to understand those feelings and yet also retain their own sense of ‘adultness’ in order to hold the child's distress. Sometimes adults can find themselves responding to children's demands ‘in kind’.

Some examples of this are:

- feeling overwhelmed by the crying of unsettled children who themselves are overwhelmed by being in school
- getting impatient when toddlers become frustrated

These are times when it is useful to take a step back and talk with colleagues about what is going on for the child, and think about how the adults can provide help, and set appropriate limits if necessary.

Practitioners need to understand that in order to be healthily independent, a child needs to be able to express dependency at vulnerable times.

This is an emotionally demanding and skilful area of practice that some practitioners find overwhelming and so avoid becoming close to children. Yet those that are able to be available, sensitive and responsive to their key children can take pride in knowing that not only are they contributing positively to the quality of their key child’s mental model of relationships for the future, they are also assisting healthy brain development and learning abilities.

Research indicates that an effective key person approach leads to:

- better-satisfied and engaged staff
- improved care and learning for children
- parents who feel confident about the quality and devotion of professional staff.
Effective practice: Key Person

Key messages

In many respects, a childminder is automatically a key person for the children they care for. In an early years setting, it is of course much easier to care for children by teamwork and organising the key person approach needs careful planning and development. The most important points to keep in mind are:

- Being clear about why the Key Person Commitment is so important, and why working in this way matters so much to children.
- Planning for effective practice including heads and managers finding time to support practitioners by listening regularly and carefully to their experiences.
- Being prepared to take time to develop the key person approach.

What the Key Person role means

For the baby or young child

The key person makes sure that, within the day-to-day demands of the setting, each child for whom they have special responsibility feels individual, cherished and thought about by someone in particular while they are away from home.

For parents and close carers at home

The key person ensures they have the opportunity to build a personal relationship with individual children rather than all children as a group in the setting. The benefits are likely to be peace of mind for parents, and the possibility for them to build a partnership with professional staff who may share with them the pleasures and stresses of child rearing. It provides an opportunity for them to liaise with someone else who loves their baby or child too. Sometimes parents speak about having to choose between being part of their child’s day, and knowing the details of how she or he spends time. The key person can make sure that parents do know about their child’s day and do not have to miss out.

For the key person

The key person approach is intense, involving hard work and a big professional and emotional commitment. However, the benefits of being and becoming a key person are that you really matter to a child and to their family. You are likely to have a powerful impact on the child’s well-being, their mental health, and their opportunities to think and learn. These powers and responsibilities will bring feelings of pleasure and pain, the joys and relief of partings and reunions and the satisfactions and anxieties of being the key person in a child’s formative early years.

For the setting

The key person approach also has benefits for the early years setting as an organisation, making staff feel more satisfied and engaged, providing better care and learning for the children and their parents. Parents are likely to develop a more trusting confidence in the competencies, qualities and devotion of professional staff. There are indications that this approach reduces staff sickness and absence and develops involvement and positive attitudes to professional development within staff teams.
Some concerns

- The key person approach does not mean that attachments with parents will be undermined. This concern seems to be based on the idea that there is a fixed amount of attachment to go round and if children have more of it in the setting, there is bound to be less at home. In fact, it seems to work the other way round: attachments at home and in the early years setting can support each other.

- The key person approach does not mean that the key person should be with their key children all the time. No parent does that and children need, and of course benefit from, interactions with other adults and children in the early years setting.

- The key person approach does not mean that children are not allowed to make close relationships with other adults. Children often choose who they want to be attached to and these choices should be respected. Exactly how children and the key person are linked needs careful thought in the early years setting.

Why the Key Person is important

The quality of care young children receive makes a huge difference not only to the quality of each day they spend in a setting but also to their long-term future.

What matters most in ‘achieving quality’ is carers who are ‘attentive, responsive, stimulating and affectionate’. Most practitioners try to be this for all the children they work with. However, being realistic, it is very difficult to offer all these things to all children and this makes huge emotional demands on practitioners. But the key person approach makes such relationships with children more possible and manageable to achieve for each child.

We do not need to rely on research to understand why a key person is so important to babies and young children when they are away from their main carers. It is sometimes said that the mobile phone, apart from its practical convenience, has been so successful because it enables us to keep in touch with the people who matter to us most. The key person helps the baby or child keep in touch with the idea that they are kept in mind, thought about and cared about, by their home carers and by the key person. This experience of reliable adults who remain attentive, affectionate and thoughtful is an enormously important experience. Graham’s story below shows how essential a key person is to children, especially when they are tired and distressed.

Graham’s story

Graham is 15 months old and goes to nursery full time (8 am to 5.30 pm) four days each week. Graham seems to love nursery, running in each morning, delighted to see his friends. He is resilient, showing his ability to manage, especially in the earlier parts of the day, with energy, exuberance, exploratory power and some rebellious spirit. He is cared for by a very sensitive, patient, caring, consistent team of four staff who work harmoniously together.

These staff put a strong emphasis on working interchangeably as a team. They believe strongly that any one of them should be able to do anything for any child at any time. They want to avoid children making individual attachments and when one of them leaves the nursery room, she does it quietly, just slipping out.

Graham copes well with this warm, affectionate team care where he has to share the attention of the staff equally with the other children. He seems to manage this most of the time throughout the day but sometimes shows his resentment by small acts of destructiveness, throwing things, or sweeping toys off shelves.
However, towards the end of the day, when he is tired, Graham is very insistent on the individual attention of Vicky. He finds it particularly hard when other children are collected but he is still waiting for his Dad or Nan to arrive. Sometimes he tries to block the door so that parents cannot leave and he has to be gently moved to one side. At this point in the day it does not take much for Graham to cry and this is what happens when Vicky changes his nappy. But it is only when she has finished and puts him back down on the ground that he gets really upset, crying and sobbing uncontrollably. Vicky is on to the next child’s nappy, though, and Graham is comforted by Brigid. He does not want Brigid, he wants Vicky, and although Brigid tries to comfort him and distract him, he cannot be consoled. But Vicky cannot attend to Graham, partly because she is changing another nappy but mostly because this is not how they work as a team and they want to actively discourage these expressions of preference by children. So Graham must stay with Brigid.

What can we learn from this observation of Graham and what he wants?

Graham does not need to be with a key person all of the time. He loves his friends at nursery and being part of a group with them for snacks, meals and story times. Membership of the group also seems to help him feel safe and confident. However, towards the end of the day, especially when he is tired, he does need a key person. Although this team would prefer to be a key team rather than key individuals, Graham has clearly decided that Vicky is the one member of staff he feels really safe and secure with and he wants to be comforted by her. It is not always possible in nursery for children to have the key person they have a close relationship with, but when it is possible, it is important that children should have that experience. It is not that the other members of the team are not competent or caring towards Graham, and Brigid does the very best she can. But it is Vicky he wants, and being child-centred means noticing that and responding to it.

Challenges and dilemmas – how close is too close?

These quotes are from staff in nurseries each working with the key person approach:

- ‘I think babies need to have somebody in nursery like their mummy… they need the warmth and the comfort and somebody that they can cuddle up to, that will take them for walks, sing songs to them and who’s just going to allow them to be when they want to be just as when they’re at home… instead of worrying about setting up activities…’

- ‘There’s that fine line… yes it’s nice to give them a cuddle but a quick cuddle’s nice, not a 20-minute cuddle… when I was at college I was taught about sitting children on your laps, not to do that and I thought, well… children of that age can become too reliant on a member of staff and you go to lunch and or home, they are still there with other staff so they need to be able to gel with all members of staff so by passing that around equally…’

- ‘They’re going to need cuddles and kisses if they’re away from their mum and dad for nine hours a day. But you’ve just got to be careful that you don’t baby them too much… But it’s hard. You can’t say to anyone how much you think you should sit them on your lap, you’ve got to think as a person yourself…’

Which of these views is closest to yours?

These different views of the key person role are actual quotations from experienced practitioners and represent common views about roles and relationships with young children. They could easily be held by the staff of neighbouring nurseries or even staff within the same nursery. Often, an early years practitioner might say that she does not know what the other practitioners in her team really think about how the role should be implemented. The question ‘How close is too close?’ in professional relationships between practitioners and children lies at the heart of professional discussions on practice. That is why it is so important to think about the feelings and points of view of practitioners as well as the feelings and points of view of parents and children. In the next section, ‘Reflecting on practice’, two short scenarios indicate the kind of discussions practitioners would need to have to consider the impact of the key person role on an anxious parent or on a five-year-old child, both coming with particular backgrounds and circumstances.
Reflecting on practice

Imagine what your setting seems like to a parent and their young child when they first arrive. It may seem busy, friendly, noisy, lively, exciting and fun to you.

- How might it seem to an anxious parent and their young child of 18 months who has just experienced a violent family break-up?
- How might it seem to a five-year-old who has been living in one room with a parent who is depressed and makes little conversation?

Time to talk and listen in groups

Sometimes, heads and managers say that their office door is always open, so that if a member of staff needs to come and talk to them about a problem, they can do so. This is valuable but it is not enough. It risks seeing talking as something that only happens when there is a problem. For the key person approach to work really well, it is important that staff teams have time to talk together in the way described below.

‘The key point is the need for regular “work discussion” groups where the only agenda is the opportunity for each worker in turn to discuss their work with children and their own feelings about the work. This is not “therapy”, but a disciplined professional exercise. [Nursery] staff and childminders who have this opportunity are likely to relate better to the children, be less stressed, and have less time off for sickness.’

(Dilys Daws, Consultant Child Psychotherapist, Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust)

Of course it is very difficult for some settings to find this time when staff are working shifts and so do not necessarily finish work at the same time for meetings. But many nurseries do manage to find a way to have this talking time regularly and find it an essential and integral part of making the key person approach work well.

In the following section, a practitioner describes her experience of the value of supervision, which is individual time for discussing professional relationships in the nursery.

Supervision – time to talk and listen individually

‘I wasn’t familiar with supervision until I came to work at [the centre] as a seconded deputy. Previously I’d worked as an Early Years Coordinator in a school in a very challenging area of [a large city] where there was a desperate – and unmet – need for the opportunity to reflect on children and issues of concern in regular carefully managed, confidential, professional meetings. At [the centre], members of the staff team (secretaries, nursery nurses, teachers, students, project manager and deputies) have at least a monthly two-hour meeting with their line manager. This is seen as so valuable that nothing is allowed to compromise it – in the rare circumstances that a meeting has to be cancelled it is immediately rescheduled. Although certain aspects, like discussion of children who are on either the Special Needs Register or the Child Protection register – form part of every month’s agenda, there is also scope to focus on areas identified by either the worker or the line manager. We use this forum to look at issues like relationships with other staff members, children and parents, areas for development, and, if needed, it’s the opportunity to have a good grumble about anything and everything to do with work. The supervisors are carefully trained in a range of supervision and counselling techniques and there is a negotiated contract (including a complaints procedure). Because of its obvious impact on self-esteem and sense of personal worth, the process plays a vital part in the good working relationships between staff, parents and children and it can have a therapeutic role... Supervision (which should not be confused with appraisal or staff meeting) in my experience has a wholly positive effect on the well-being of the team. In turn, this impacts on the life of the Centre and the relationships we have with children and parents.’
Secure attachment and the demands it may bring

You hear it said sometimes in nursery that a child starting at a setting who settles easily and without distress is a good child. Yet distress should not be seen automatically as a bad sign. Distress can be a very normal and natural response for children when they are parted from the people they are most used to and that they love. In the following extract, it is clear how easily this can be misunderstood:

‘On Tuesday this week, Tina was on her way to work in the Baby Unit, when she had a car accident. She wasn’t badly hurt, although the car was a write-off, but she’ll be off for a couple of days. Joseph is only just one and he’s so linked himself to Tina. He just wouldn’t settle when he arrived this morning and although I tried to cuddle him, he just went all stiff – I know he just wanted Tina – not me. It was horrible for him and it’s a horrible feeling too when they don’t want you. You have got to work hard in nursery to get the children to be used to all the staff and to be able to manage with all the members of the team. You can see the problem if they get too attached to one person.’

(quoted in Elfer et al., 2003, p.6)

Does Joseph’s story show the dangers of the key person approach?

It is better to think about this scenario as showing challenges rather than dangers. The word danger implies risk and of course there is no danger in this sense for Joseph. He is upset that Tina cannot be available to him and that means a challenge for him and for the other practitioners in Tina’s nursery. But although missing someone special when they cannot be available to you is painful, especially for a baby or young child, and no practitioner would choose to see a child upset, it would be far worse for a child not to be allowed to make any attachment to a special person in nursery. Even as adults, missing our own key people can be a painful experience but very few of us would avoid special relationships altogether in order to avoid the pain of separation.

Goldschmied and Selleck (1996) describe a ‘triangle of trust and communication’ between the parent or carer, the child and the key person, which incorporates trust, attachment, guilt, intimacy, anxiety, comfort, rivalry, doubt and loss.

Taking time to develop the key person approach

Another theme that practitioners have found essential to keep in mind in thinking about the key person approach is the importance of allowing time for it to develop. In the following section, the nursery manager describes the way her staff implemented the key person approach in their nursery, persevering to overcome obstacles and finding huge benefits.

Two- to three-year ‘apples’ room

‘As the Manager, I along with the supervisor of the two- to three-year-olds would like to share with you some of the changes that have been implemented and the effects that this has had on the children, the staff, the parents and the overall running of the ‘apples’ room.

Within the nursery we worked to a key worker system which probably the majority of childcare practitioners today still work to. Each child had a key worker who carried out observations on them.
That key worker would plan for their children's individual needs and develop them socially, emotionally, intellectually, culturally and physically.

The key workers knew their children, and the children's abilities, and we as key workers could take the appropriate steps to help our children move forward and develop skills further, however during a visit from the under-threes training and quality advisor we discussed ways of taking the key worker role one step further for the development of both the nursery staff and the children. We felt we could build on the relationships between child and key worker and at the same time help our children become more confident.

We implemented a new system where the key worker became the key person. The key person is responsible for their children. They greet their children, feed their children, change their children’s nappies, and in turn bond with their children.

Within the two- to three-year age group the staff were apprehensive about this new idea and some staff said it would not work, but all the staff were willing to try and use the techniques to the best of their abilities. To start, things were slower as all staff had to find a routine that worked best for them as individuals and also as a group within the room. We however persevered with the new system and we feel this has had amazing effects on the running of the room and the nursery as a whole.

Within the two- to three-year room, the staff were concerned that the system may fail in the absence of individual key people, due to their key children being without their main supporter. At this time sickness and absence levels within the nursery were quite high and we as a team did not want this to affect the children's learning and development.

We therefore implemented a ‘buddy’ system where in the absence of a key person, their buddy would step in as a familiar support rather like a ‘deputy’ key person. However, since the key person approach has been in place, the sickness and absence levels have improved considerably. On speaking to individual staff members regarding sickness and absence the majority of staff had the same impression, that staff simply did not want their key children to lack their support and therefore endeavoured to be there for them each day. This has been apparent in the strong relationships that have been developed between key children and key people.

The relationships that have been created are amazing not only between child and adult but also between the staff team as a whole. The staff morale has been boosted due to everyone experiencing these changes together and the need to work closely, to ensure the day-to-day running was as smooth and consistent as possible.

To keep momentum going, within the two- to three-year room we have also implemented a system of praise where all staff have the opportunity to write positive comments about their colleagues’ practice for all to see. This technique has also proved very effective and staff are genuinely keen to get into work and put 100% effort into their work, as they are being recognised for this.

The pace of development has also improved. An example of this is a young child who was toilet training and progressing at a steady rate. The child had various staff members who would encourage him to use the toilet facilities and the child would be praised effectively. When the key person approach came into play, the child had the benefit of knowing he had the support of the person he had the strongest bond with, as well as her praise and encouragement. As a result the child has more confidence in his own abilities and now uses the bathroom facilities expertly.

Due to the staff knowing their children's likes and having a broader understanding of their needs we find it easier to plan for our children taking into consideration what they may hope to achieve from the
activities. We as key people have observed our children in various areas of the nursery and have recorded when the children have lacked involvement and well-being. We have looked at the two- to three-year room through the children's eyes and have changed the room to benefit the children, and involve them more.

We feel that considerable changes have been made within the two- to three-year room, all of which have had fantastic results on the morale within the room, and the well-being of the children...

Throughout the changes, we have been fortunate enough to have the support of our parents. They have been enthusiastic about the new developments, and spoke positively about the changes that have occurred. The parents have also expressed that they feel they gain more information and support regarding their children's progress within the room. They too have built up strong relationships with the key person, and this is all beneficial to their child(ren).

We as a team would recommend that other childcare settings take on board these changes and how they have worked for us. Although at first we doubted the success, we are thrilled to have gained so much from it, and have been delighted at the progress both we and the children have made.

Nursery Manager and two- to three-years Supervisor

The key person approach and three- to five-year-olds

As children get older, sustained individual attention is more difficult but also becomes less necessary for most children. Nevertheless, it is still important to ensure key person principles continue to underpin practice and even ratios for three- and four-year-olds of 1:8, 1:10 or 1:13 means that this is still possible. The crucial element is ensuring that the children are able to begin and end their day or session in a key group with their key person. This helps to develop a sense of belonging and connection not only with the key person but with the other children too. At this age the role of the children in offering each other security, through friendships and in the sense of community of small groups, is increasingly important.

Another key aspect is the key person's role in linking with parents. As with younger children, parents always want and are entitled to opportunities to talk about their child with the adult who is spending time with them outside the home. The key person is responsible for their group's learning and development, for ensuring that no child gets overlooked and that every child is well known to at least one adult and does not get lost in a pattern of serial care.

Dorothy Selleck (2001) (see below) has written of the dangers of serial care, the opposite of key person practice.

The key person approach versus serial care

For each child in the early years, between beginning in the baby room to entering a Key Stage 1 class, it is important to challenge the pattern of relationship that really amounts to serial care. Serial care has come to be accepted as the normal and acceptable transitions on to, and between, for example childminders → daycare → preschool → nursery class → Reception class → ‘wrap-around’. Of course transitions may be unavoidable and necessary if for example parents move home. However, even without such major family changes, it is commonplace for a child to experience as many as six or more transitions and probably many more serial carers before the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

(Selleck, 2001, pp. 78-95)

The key person role in Reception classes for four- and five-year-olds is more difficult. However, in many Reception classes there will be more than one adult, such as a teaching assistant, working with the teacher. It should then still be possible to share the welcoming and greeting of children and apply the same principles of consistency, knowing each child well and building a close relationship with parents and close carers.
References


Further resources


All About…transitions

Anne O’Connor

Policy, procedures and the practitioner’s role in helping children make a stress-free move to a new setting or class.

A Good Start

The emotions that come with change can be successfully handled by children when their new setting has a clear welcoming procedure.

By the time children enter statutory education they are likely to have lived through several transitions in family life as well as in educational settings. Research is beginning to confirm what parents and practitioners have long known - that transition is stressful for children, just as it is for adults, and the resulting stress can have a far-reaching impact on children’s emotional well-being and academic achievements.

We all know the familiar feelings when contemplating change. Anticipation, excitement and curiosity may well be tempered with anxiety, uncertainty, fear and a sense of bewilderment as we are faced with unfamiliar experiences, people, places or events.

What a difference it makes if we have a sense of being eagerly awaited, of knowing that we will be treated with respect and allowed to take some control over what happens to us in our new situation.

Sadly, this isn’t the experience of many children as they move from one setting to the next within the Foundation Stage. As adults, we know that some of us seem better at coping with change than others. This ability is likely to be rooted in our childhood experiences, as the children who are best supported through early transitions learn positive ways of coping with change whenever it occurs, at any stage of [their] lives.

Transitions, therefore, carry a big responsibility for early years practitioners. However, if our approach to transition is firmly rooted throughout our practice (rather than something we worry about just before and after change occurs), then we are more likely to be raising emotionally intelligent children who make strong attachments, are resilient and resourceful when faced with change and are able to take risks and embrace new experiences.

Settling in Children who are settling (at any age) do best when:

- **Transition is made a priority.** Managers, head teachers and governing bodies need to show that they are aware of the importance of transition by making it a priority. This will have time and cost implications in enabling practitioners to meet children, carers and other settings, make home visits and transfer information, as well as developing a curriculum and ethos that supports the gradual and supported integration of new children.

  All too often, practitioners are impeded in developing good practice by ‘top-down’ expectations, routines and procedures, and only minimal recognition of the need to support children in transition.
They are familiar with the people, places and routines. We all accept that familiarity is one of the most important factors in a smooth transition, and yet it is all too easy to think that a one-off visit or introductory session meets the need. Explore ways to ensure that children become as familiar as possible with a new setting and its staff.

They can make frequent visits to the setting. Such visits need to amount to more than just the formal ‘new admissions’ visit or ‘open days’.

Children will benefit from frequent, informal drop-in sessions with a parent, carer or familiar adult, that enable them to gain first-hand experience of the new setting at different times of the day. Very young children have most to gain from such visits, but these are still of benefit to older children (and adults).

They receive a home visit. Home visiting can be intrusive and expensive in both staff time and cover. It does need to be approached with sensitivity, but the rewards will definitely be worth the effort. It is a powerful opportunity to allow children (and families) to get to know new staff on their own territory.

They have a keyworker. Children (and their parents or carers) arriving into the buzz and confusion of a new setting need to know they are not on their own. They need to have at least one adult who can act as their personal ‘interpreter’ while they make sense of this new world. A keyworker system means that each child and their family have a practitioner who is assigned to them, even though they will also be interacting with, and be cared for by, other members of staff throughout their day.

A keyworker has special responsibility for an individual child, although the degree of involvement will depend on various factors, not least of which is the way the setting chooses to organise the system.

Ideally, a keyworker would be responsible for a home visit, would greet the child on arrival and help them separate from their parent or carer, would plan to spend some time with them every day and observe, support, interact with and extend their play as appropriate. Just as importantly, they would have individual and specific contact with the child’s parent or carer on a regular basis - a vital factor in reducing parents’ stress and anxiety when leaving a child in a setting. The presence of a keyworker is likely to have far-reaching effects, in that it can support a child in building the secure attachments that are essential not just to their emotional well-being, but also their cognitive development.

Their parents are involved and consulted. A great deal of research supports the belief that we can only do our best for the children in our care if we involve their parents and families. We need to listen to what parents can tell us about their children and accept that as their child’s first educator, they have a wealth of knowledge that we would do well to heed.

The work of the Pen Green Centre team, for example, in involving and working with parents and families shows us just what can be achieved in the development and understanding of children’s schemas. As long ago as 1987, Professor Tina Bruce was encouraging us to focus more on the ‘child-in-the-family/community’ and reminding us that it is pointless to try to educate children without taking account of the most significant people and influences in their lives.

We need to be knowledgeable about a child’s ethnicity, language and dialect, community
and locality if we are to offer them familiar sights, sounds and experiences that will help them settle.

- **Their parents are supported.** Sending a child to a new setting or class can be scary for parents too! Many parents bringing their children to a setting for the first time may have unhappy memories about education and institutions. It is vital that we put ourselves in their position and look closely at how we can make our settings welcoming and less threatening to new parents so that they, in turn, can give positive messages to their children about their new setting. Involving a parent fully in settling their child can reduce their anxiety greatly while enabling them to get a feel for the setting and how it works.

- **They have an informal, relaxed start to the session.** Leaving a parent or carer is hard when there is a roomful of people watching - an waiting - for the business of the day to begin. Relaxed starts, ideally staggered, are invaluable, as they allow the child and their parent to take their time separating and to continuous provision (as opposed to carpet-based or registration routines) provides the child and parent with lots of options for handling the separation.

- **Their friendships are acknowledged.** Australian studies of children making transitions from home to kindergarten or school have found that having friends in the same class can markedly help children adjust to the demands of the new setting. Interestingly, the studies suggest that it can also compensate for other factors that might make transition harder, such as being the youngest in the group, speaking English as an additional language or being a boy (Margetts K, 1997). So, ask parents and staff at previous settings about a child’s friendships.

- **Their setting is flexible.** The approach to admissions and settling needs to be flexible if it is to address the individual needs of children and families.

  Some children will make the transition smoothly, in the first instance, only to become confused, anxious or disappointed when they realise that this is a long-term scenario! Others will need lots of support while they take tiny steps to becoming relaxed and enthusiastic about the setting.

  Some families will expect their child to separate readily, while others will expect their child to struggle with change.

  Practitioners have to be watchful and attentive to find out what is needed to help a child (and their family) cope with the transition, and then be prepared to act on their findings. A 'one-size-fits-all' approach to settling is never, therefore, going to be the best way. Adapt the routines and organisation of the setting so that you can provide a ‘settling’ policy that really does meet the needs of children, rather than expecting them to ‘fit in’ with existing timetables and procedures.

- **There is a degree of predictability.** This doesn’t mean strict adherence to a rigid timetable, however. The best sort of predictability gives children the certainty that there won’t be too many interruptions to their long, sustained play (or engagement in a continuous curriculum) or too many breaks for adult-driven tasks, such as snack times, assemblies and whole-class discussions. (The Continuous Curriculum: Planning for spontaneous play suggests ways to implement this in KS1; see Further Reading.) * They are encouraged to be independent. Children moving from one stage to the next can rehearse new skills in the familiar setting, then gradually try them out in the new one. Those who lack experience or confidence in their physical independence need to know that there will always be someone to help them. Just as important is the opportunity to develop, and maintain, high levels of intellectual independence.

  It is generally accepted now that young children are persistent and powerful thinkers. They have a tremendous inner drive to make sense of their world and their experiences, which also gives them a valuable sense of being in control.

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80 The Early Years Foundation Stage Primary National Strategy

All too often, the transition from one stage to the next denies children the opportunity to take control of what is happening to them. And it is this lack of control which is at the root of the anxiety that we all feel when going through a transition, no matter how excited we might feel about it.

Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage is clear that children need to be able to make choices and initiate tasks and activities for themselves.

Removing opportunities for intellectual independence as children progress into KS1 has many repercussions, not least of which are hidden stress and damage to positive learning dispositions

- **There is a safe place to take risks and make mistakes.** A supportive learning environment that enables children to try things out, take risks and learn from their mistakes is one that is constantly preparing children to handle transition well. Life is full of changes and there will always be risks, but we can do our best to help children make the most of it by providing a safe, yet challenging, place for them to explore and develop their independence and self-reliance.

**Reggio Emilia: Learning From Their Peers**

- ‘Don’t be afraid of school because there’s nothing to be afraid of, because you get bigger and you like it.’
- ‘When there’s something to eat that you don’t like... you should tell the teacher. Don’t throw it under the table.’
- ‘Never jump down from the wall on the mountain, because you’ll get gravel stuck in your hands.’
- ‘When I came into this school I didn't know anybody, so I was scared and I thought "How can I get to know them?" First I made one friend and then together we got to know everybody.’

These are the words of five and six year olds preparing to leave their pre-school in Reggio Emilia, Italy. They are recorded in a book, Advisories, written for the incoming three-year-olds about to take their places in the pre-school.

The book is filled with recollections and advice - how to find the toilets, where to hide in the garden, which teacher wears make-up and which one is likely to pinch a roast potato off your plate at lunchtime!

The book is large (all the better to be read by parent and child together), designed like a sticker book, with two pages of adhesive photos in the centre, to peel off and stick in the numbered empty boxes.
There is also a multitude of line drawings by the children. The advice to parents is that they read the book to themselves first 'with eyes and ears open and ready to listen, to share and to smile', and to wallow in the memories of their own childhood. Then 'when the fragrances of your childhood memories have become intense, you are ready to read Advisories to your child. One page a day, so that the school... becomes an interesting world to get to know, a world that your child wants to venture into and become a part of.'

This is a powerful and emotive book, not least because it reminds us that there is no better person to tell us about something new and scary than someone who has just recently been through the experience themselves. These children manage to be neither 'consoling, nor alarming', so that they neither 'frighten nor reassure them too much'.

Perhaps we can't all prepare glossy books to welcome our new arrivals, but we can certainly take on board the idea and motivations behind Advisories and let our Foundation Stage graduates tell it like it is. And we must pay good attention to what they are saying.

**Case Study: A Community Affair**

Strong links between the school and local childcare providers enable children to settle in quickly at Trinity and St Michael's Church of England Methodist Primary School in the Lancashire village of Croston.

Reception class teacher Mary Driver says, 'The local pre-school and nursery know the children so well and have a wealth of information about them, so by using that you can ensure the children get a good start at school.'

In preparation for the children moving up to reception, Mrs Driver visits both settings to observe the children, discuss their transition profiles and talk to keyworkers.

The children then attend two sessions at the school. The current reception class, in the care of a supply teacher, vacate the room, leaving the incoming children free to explore their future classroom in the company of current childcarers and school reception staff.

The incoming children are also invited to join the reception class for storytime sessions during the last half-hour of the day. While the children settle down for a story, their parents are invited to the school hall, where they can socialise with each other, find out about local initiatives such as adult learning programmes and meet other school staff, such as the school nurse and cook. The first day of school is treated as an open day, with parents allowed to stay as long as they wish. To further ease the settling-in process, the children start school in three groups, organised by age. Group one attends in the mornings for a week, then go full-time and the second group joins for their mornings-only first week.

Croston Pre-school manager Janet Williams believes the children benefit greatly from their links with the school, making the move to reception class 'a natural progression'. She says, 'I can't think of any child where we've had concerns about them moving to school.' Mrs Driver says, 'The message I'd really like to give other teachers is to make the most of preschool and nursery staff. They can tell us a lot, and the little things that they tell us about the children are invaluable.'
Practitioners

Sensitivity, awareness, and resources such as diaries and photos are essential tools practitioners can use in transitions

For a successful transition, children need practitioners who:

- Give them time to become familiar with the idea of moving on, to talk about it, to reflect on what they already know and have learned, to absorb new information, to revisit and remember what went before, to adjust to the changes and to make mistakes without fear of judgement. They know that children need to be allowed time for regression as much as consolidation.

- Listen to them to find out: what worries or excites them about a move, how they would like the move to happen and when they are telling us they need help with the little things as well as the big things.

- Recognise the importance of attachment and emotional well-being and are able to recognise the needs of an individual child and their family in this respect. They know that children need to be sure of their unconditional care regardless of whether the child and their family conform to the expected norms.

- Offer pro-active support, particularly to those who may appear to be coping, and don’t wait for a crisis to occur before they respond. Children need practitioners who know that there is often a ‘honeymoon’ period for children settling in, and that some children will have less obvious ways of showing distress.

- Show respect for a child’s way of making it work for themselves, by listening to the child and their carers about how they want to handle the separation from each other and adapting settling procedures to make the most of this. They know that children often need transitional objects or particular routines and habits to comfort themselves until ready to go it alone.

- Appreciate what the child brings with them and has learned at home or in a previous setting. They know that this is important for the child’s self-esteem as much as to set starting points for future learning, and they are not judgemental or obsessed with ‘correctness’, particularly with regard to physical or self-help skills. They actively seek to make and maintain strong links with home and other settings that the child has attended.

- Plan carefully for transition, making sure they gather, read and take notice of all the information passed to them by parents and previous settings. They know that some children will be more vulnerable than others at this time and plan accordingly.

- Are creative in their approach to supporting transition, and, for example, ask outgoing children what they think would help the newbies!

Being Creative

To help children settle in:

- Prepare a settling diary for each child to be shared with parents/carers (this is particularly important if parents aren’t the ones bringing the child to the setting). Record the length and times of stays, happy moments, times of distress and soothing strategies.

- Provide a cassette tape and recorder and suggest that parents might like to record a reassuring message or nursery rhyme that the child can listen to if they are missing mum or dad. This could be particularly significant for children whose first language is not spoken by anyone else in the setting.
Let the children take photos that are relevant to them of their current setting (for new, incoming children) and of their new setting when they visit. Use them for displays, but also put copies into a book that each child can borrow to take home and share with their families.

Provide children with a little book containing all the names of the children and staff in their new setting.

Invite all staff in the new setting or class to come and be interviewed by the children before they move. Let them plan the questions in advance by asking them what they want to know about their new teachers (their favourite colour, song or football team). Take photos and make a display/book. Parents will appreciate the information too.

Prepare a scrapbook for children who are leaving. Add photos, captions, observation notes and examples of work, and present it to the child and their family as a souvenir of their time with you.

In the first few weeks of the school year, link Year 1 children with the reception children to act as 'buddies' for each other, in the playground, dinner hall and so on. The links can be resumed again the following year to pass on information about the next school year.

As a group, fill a small suitcase with items from the current setting that children would like to take with them for the first week(s) of their new class. They can return it ceremoniously when they are ready!

Make cut-outs of empty suitcases with handles and encourage the children to think of things they have learned or achieved while they have been with you (use all six areas of learning). Write these on labels and stick them in their cases to take with them as they continue their learning journey.

If you make the cases sturdy enough they can carry them right through Key Stage 1 and 2!

**Foundation Stage Units**

One way to address the issue of transition from nursery to reception is to remove it. More and more schools and local authorities are setting up Foundation Stage units/settings where nursery and reception provision might be:

- closely linked
- combined for parts or the day
- completely integrated.

The increased familiarity with staff and the learning environment that this allows inevitably means that transition is not such a hurdle for children and their families. This is particularly true in units where there is complete integration of children from three to five years old.

As children spend a minimum of two years with the same staff, in the same learning environment, there is no break to their progress through the Foundation Stage and practitioners are able to build strong relationships with the children and their families and potentially gain greater insight into their needs.
Home Visiting

Home visits are more successful if they are well organised, so consider the following points when making your plans.

- Guarantee parents'/carers' privacy. Make it clear that they are under no obligation to accept a home visit, and that the purpose of the visit is not to inspect their home. Offer a home visit, rather than sending a formal letter announcing your intention to descend upon them. Respect their wishes if they decline and invite them instead to come to the setting for an informal meeting and information gathering session. Adopting the right manner during the visit is important. Many parents who are initially anxious about a visit often comment positively afterwards.

- Ensure practitioners’ safety. Carry out visits in pairs. Impress on managers and head teachers the value of home visits to ensure that they allocate the staff needed to carry out the visits. If you have a keyworker system, ensure that at least one key person takes part in the visit.

- Gather admissions information. It is easier for parents to find information such as doctor’s phone numbers while at home, and helpful, and speedier, if you tell them in advance the information that you will need.

- Discuss the setting. Talk about its routines, procedures and approach, stressing the importance of play in learning in the early years. Let parents voice any concerns they may have about the setting.

- Discuss the child's development without appearing judgemental. Let the parents voice any concerns about their child, and reassure them that children’s development varies greatly in the early years.

Find out what the child enjoys doing, how they respond to change and challenge, what is likely to upset them and what strategies are beneficial when the child is distressed or challenging.

- Let one practitioner focus on the parent and the other on the child. Bring along a book or toy to share with the child. Often, children want to show you their bedroom or garden -a valuable opportunity for the child to take the lead in the interaction. Leave the book or the toy with them so that they can return it to the setting when they arrive. This can also be a good time to introduce an item that bears the setting/school logo, such as a bookbag or sweatshirt, so that the child can begin to identify themselves as a member of the group.

- Prepare a welcome pack. Include literature for the parent and items like paper, pens and books for the child. Invite existing parents in your setting to produce the materials, as they can address the issues that concerned them when their child was admitted. Prepare, for example, a question and answer booklet or a video of the setting from a child’s point of view. Show the video during the visit, or at the setting if a video player isn’t available. If possible, leave a copy of the video with the family until the child is admitted.

- Have an interpreter where necessary. For other language speakers, have an interpreter or ensure there is someone at home who will be able to help.

Note that for many families the visit may be seen as an important social occasion -something worth remembering when offered your third cup of tea!

- Ensure you have plenty of time. Be careful to allocate enough time for each visit so that you can really listen and engage with the parents and family members as they tell you about the child and share with you their hopes and fears for them.
Prompts for discussion can include:

- important adults in the child’s life
- child (and family) interests
- major events in the child’s life
- favourite foods
- sleep patterns
- how the child usually shows anxiety or distress
- what helps to soothe and comfort them
- the child’s motivations and schema(s)
- how the parent would like to approach the first separation and what they think would most help the child in their first moments apart from the parent.

Discussion about these things will ultimately be more helpful (and reassuring to the parent) than ticking off a list of assessment criteria, for example, pencil control, number awareness and the child’s ability to use a knife and fork.

**Transition Audit**

**Review your practice and evaluate your setting’s transition policies at all stages from entry level on to Key Stage 1**

**All Transitions**

Do you:

- meet with senior management and all relevant staff well in advance to discuss and evaluate policies for transition and settling? Do management give special consideration to times of transition (for children, parents and staff) and ensure that staff have enough time to prepare?
- organise and support a full home visiting programme?
- allocate sufficient time for preparing staff/parents/children and for staff to access, read and share information?
- plan a programme of formal visits and frequent drop-in sessions?
- share transition plans with parents (and children, where relevant)?
- evaluate correspondence to parents? Is the tone welcoming, the information direct? Does it invite parents to become involved in the process and suggest ways they can help you to help their child?
- allow children (and staff helping them to settle) time for the settling process, to regress a little, to stand and watch others until they are ready to join in, to keep their parent, carer or transitional object with them as long as they want?
- respond sensitively to parent anxieties? Are you aware of why some parents are over-anxious (for example, their child is first or last born, or has health problems, or the family has domestic difficulties)? Are you supportive, but firm, with parents who put their own needs first (due to, for example, work commitments)?
plan how to support and enable parents settling their children? Do you offer flexibility at the start of sessions so that parents stay as long as they need, a place for them to go when they first leave very young children for a short while, opportunities for them to meet and chat with other parents going through the same experience?

**Home To Setting**

Do you:

- offer home visits?
- plan a timetable for home visits, including interpreters and keyworkers?
- prepare welcome packs?
- develop an admission form/home visiting format that allows parents to tell you everything they want you to know about their child?
- use this information to plan the learning environment (for example, responding to children’s schemas)?
- use photographs of the child and their family (taken with parental permission) for labels and in welcoming displays?
- offer staggered admissions/transition?
- ask older children to prepare materials and information that they think will be helpful to new children?
- offer flexible/staggered start times and individual settling programmes?
- access and read all incoming information on individual children, highlight those likely to be vulnerable and have special or additional needs, and brief all relevant staff?
- Review each child’s settling on a daily basis with parents and key staff?

**Between Foundation Stage (FS) Settings**

As well as the above, do you:

- visit and observe children in their previous setting?
- provide as much information as possible about your setting?
- ensure that children will still have constant access to outdoors and resources necessary for all the areas of learning in the FS curriculum?
- use a staff member as a ‘bridging person’ who moves between the settings to support children with the move?
- talk with parents about the FS curriculum and how you plan for children’s progress across settings?

**From Foundation Stage To Year 1**

As well as the above, do you provide opportunities:

- for children and parents to visit Year 1 classrooms and relevant staff well in advance of the move?
for Year 1 staff to spend time observing children at play, the organisation and routines of FS classes, FS staff supporting child-initiated activities?

for FS practitioners to share the FS profiles with Year 1 staff, and explain how the profiles can help establish starting points for each child?

for children to raise questions, talk about their concerns, and to have these feelings acknowledged?

for children to reflect upon and share their achievements with Year 1 staff?

for children to talk about how they would like to handle the move and incorporate their suggestions?

for children to reflect upon and share their achievements with Year 1 staff?

As Year 1 staff, do you also:

- familiarise yourself with the FS curriculum guidance and materials supporting transition into Key Stage 1?

  read the FS profile on each child ahead of the children's arrival and discuss them with FS staff? Do you discuss ways to make the most of the learning that has already taken place and identify children who are talented or gifted, have additional needs and may initially need a modified FS curriculum (such as, children who are summer-born, very active or have had a disadvantaged time at Foundation Stage)?

- invite parents to an informal session soon after the transition so the children can show off their new class and teacher?
Further Reading and References

- Fabian, Hilary and Dunlop, Aline-Wendy (eds) Transitions in the Early Years: Debating continuity and progression for children in early education (RoutledgeFalmer)
- Fabian, Hilary, Children Starting School: A Guide to successful transitions and transfers for teachers and assistants (David Fulton)
- Dowling, Marion, Young Children's Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Paul Chapman Publications)
- Bruce, Tina, Early Childhood Education (Hodder & Stoughton)
- Whalley, Margy and the Pen Green Family Centre Team, Working with Parents (Hodder Arnold)
- Bayley, Ros, and Featherstone, Sally, Smooth Transitions: Ensuring continuity in the Foundation Stage (Featherstone Education)
- Where’s My Peg? A parent and child guide to the first experiences of school (Save the Children)
- Informations and links to case studies on Foundation Stage Units: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/faqs/foundation_stage/1152575/##1156595
- A Study of the Transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage One (DfES/NFER, www.nfer.ac.uk/publications)

O’Connor, A. All about… TRANSITIONS Nursery World.
## Transition Audit

A tool to help you to review aspects of your practice and evaluate your setting’s transition policies at all stages from entry level on to Key Stage 1.

### All Transitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do You:</th>
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### Between Foundation Years Settings

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit and observe children in their previous setting?</td>
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<td>Provide as much information as possible about your setting?</td>
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<td>Ensure that children will still have constant access to outdoors and resources necessary for all the areas of learning in the Foundation Years curriculum?</td>
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<td>Use a staff member as a ‘bridging person’ who moves between the settings to support children with the move?</td>
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<td>Talk with parents about the Foundation Years curriculum and how you plan for children’s progress across settings?</td>
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From Reception Class To Year 1

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<td>For children and parents to visit Year 1 classrooms and relevant staff well in advance of the move?</td>
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<td>For Reception Class practitioners to share the EYFS profiles with Year 1 staff, and explain how the profiles can help establish starting points for each child?</td>
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<td>For children to talk about how they would like to handle the move and incorporate their suggestions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>To commemorate their ‘graduation’ from the Foundation Years, with, for example, a party, assembly or souvenir book?</td>
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<tr>
<th>As Year 1 staff, do you also:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familiarise yourself with the Foundation Years curriculum guidance and materials supporting transitions into Key Stage 1?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read the EYFS profile on each child ahead of the children’s arrival and discuss them with Reception Class staff? Do you discuss ways to make the most of the learning that has already taken place and identify children who are talented or gifted, have additional needs and may initially need a modified Foundation curriculum (such as, children who are summer-born, very active or have had a disadvantaged time at Foundation Stage)?</td>
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<td>Invite parents to an informal session soon after the transition so the children can show off their new class and teacher?</td>
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Adapted from ‘All About….transitions’ – The Early Years Foundation Stage Primary National Strategy. 0012-2007BKT-EN (from EYFS CD Rom)

Anne O’Connor
## Parent Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<td>Did you meet the class teacher/TA before your child entered the class?</td>
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<td>If yes, when?</td>
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<td>If yes, when?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did you have a tour of the school before your child entered Reception Class?</td>
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<td>If no, would this have in fact been helpful?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did you find the three induction afternoons helpful and if so, please tell us why?</td>
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</table>
Would it have been helpful to have had further induction days for you and your child?

Do you think there should be more interactions between the pre-school and school? If yes, what aspects do you think could be improved – and how?

In general terms, do you have any other suggestions as to how the transition process between pre-school, and reception could be improved?
Actions from Parent Questionnaire.

Did you meet the class teacher? When?

- All parents said they had met with the teacher at induction sessions or briefly when looking at the school. Continue with induction sessions. Also aim to meet parents during more frequent visits to pre-school (every half term throughout the year). This means being present at pick-up/drop-off times at pre-school.

Helpful to have meeting with teacher before starting school?

- Overwhelming majority said yes this would be useful. As well as more informal meetings during my visits to pre-school I will set up individual meetings for parents to discuss child, looking at family situations, personality of child (likes and dislikes), friendship groups and any difficulties or concerns. This would also be an opportunity to give advice to parents about how best to prepare their child for school. These will be scheduled in the final term at pre-school.

Did you have a tour of the school?

- Most parents had not had a formal tour of the school. I will arrange a time when parents can come in and see the school, ask questions etc. This will also include a meeting about the day to day events in the class. Reading books and records, fruit and milk money, class pegs and trays etc. These will not take place at the same time as the inductions as it is necessary for me to be with the children at this time. Due to work commitments, childcare etc I will arrange a number of sessions for the formal tour of the school and meeting so as many parents as possible can come. These will take place in the final term of school.

Induction days helpful?

- 100% said yes to this. I will continue to have the induction days in the summer term.

Useful to have more induction days?

- Mixed review. I will keep the number of induction days to 3 afternoons with the addition of a formal tour of the school and meeting with the parents at a different time.

More interaction between pre-school and school?

- Continue to invite pre-school to Christmas play and take YR&Y1 to watch the pre-school Christmas play. Invite pre-school and parents to an assembly at the end of the year. Not the final assembly as this is a celebration of Y6 and can be quite long. Instead have an assembly welcoming the new children into school in the last few weeks of term.
- Take reception children to pre-school during some of my visits to pre-school in the spring and summer terms. The pre-school children will then become familiar with the school children, the uniform and expectations of ‘big school’ children.
- In the summer term (before induction sessions) go into pre-school to talk to the children about school, what we do and think we’ll learn.

Suggestions to improve transition?

- Create buddy system where buddy writes to pre-school child welcoming them to school. This buddy will then be their buddy for induction sessions and when they enter school in September.
- Arrange to visit each child individually at home during the summer holidays.