

Early Years Virtual Transition- making the unfamiliar -familiar

My sister has recently moved next door with her grandson and family - including 4 yo Reve. Over the fence I've asked him about getting a place at his new school. He did attend a private nursery for a couple of days a week. "I'm going to rain forest school" he tells me. His Mum and Dad have tried to talk to him about school and forest school. They have walked to school during lockdown but can't see much more than the entrance. It's by KFC so we hope he doesn't think that's lunch sorted! We've looked online and there is information for parents and some videos to show Reve about the forest school. He is new to the area but hasn't met anyone due to the current circumstance. He's never been to school. He hasn't interacted with another child during lockdown –other than to talk to cousins on line. How can we prepare him for similarities with his nursery and what more there is to offer – sadly no real rain forest animals?

What does the child need?

What will I see at my school?

A virtual tour or photographs of the entrance, classroom and outdoor area, the toilets, the lunch hall, and all the main places I will encounter. The Head might take the family on a virtual tour around the school. They could also tell the child/ parent 'this is what we would like to know about you.'

You will need to consider before and after school and wrap around as well as the lunch time staff children may meet and the spaces they will need to become familiar with.

What toys will I be able to play with?

You could do an 'I spy' video/ photo to ask children to look for toys that they have at home or nursery. You might ask current children to voice over a video and share what they like to play with in nursery/ reception/ year one. He wants to know 'will there be dinosaurs?'

Who will look after me?

An introductory video or photograph of the key persons that they will meet and be looked after by. Learning about their teacher and finding out a bit about them. Can the teachers read him a story – perhaps one that will be enjoyed on his first day? You might phone each family for a video chat?

Who will I play with?

A tricky one. Ideally they will want to see some photographs/ video of the children they can play with and the things they like to do. Would it be possible to have a photo portrait wall in the class with the children, their names and see what they like to play with? Could the children drop / send a picture to school where they have drawn themselves and some of the things they like to play with – or stuck pictures from the Argos catalogue around?. It would show you what toys were favourites and you could share a photo-show of these with the new class. Reve would know that there was an Oliver [like at nursery] and he too liked to play with super heroes. You could have a collection box at the end of school or at the start of term where children might be able to walk to school and post the pictures for their teacher – ready for start of term.

You could add these to a book in the reading area once they have been displayed.

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Can you ask children [and their parents] who attend school, and live close to the new child, to drop off a 'welcome pack'?

What will I do?

Is a basic visual photo-timetable available for the parents/ children? Children could be encouraged to follow this in the weeks before starting school. This would make the routine events familiar and use the symbols they will see in school.

Get ready for the day> snack> play> drinks> carpet > play> lunch> etc

Can you show activities that happen on different days –so children and parents can be prepared – PE day, forest school day, when is PPA and a new teacher will be seen?

A virtual day would be great to share 'typical' events they can look forward to – video/ photo. Do you have music for tidy up time, line up time march etc which parents can share with children [or use!].

Share story ideas with parents so they can talk to children about these routines-

Tom and Sofia Start School - <https://uk.mantralingua.com/content/tom-sofia-start-school-trailer>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/starting-primary-school/zvbthbk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zQivaCXu-Q> Ahlbergs 'Starting School'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgbDO-gX9pM> –Charlie and Lola

'All My Friends' by Gill Label was available at The Works and 'See You Later, Mum!' by Jennifer Northway on Amazon

What will I learn?

The current year group children could help share some of the 'school ready' skills they needed to start in 2s, nursery, reception, year one....

I can [do this] on my own ... *can some children video and voice over?* –I can peel my own fruit, I can choose my lunch from the menu, I can wait my turn [I know I can't always win/ come first, ask my teacher if I need something] School Ready Bingo!

Share some of the stories and rhymes children will encounter during the first week – link them to 'at home' learning ideas [Hungry Little Minds, Tiny Happy People, BBC bite size] ... making fewer things unfamiliar.

What do I need?

Show a photograph of the things inside a child's bag – for the day and extra things they will need in the week such as PE kit.

This is where?

You could pose questions for a conversation with a parent/ sibling – this is where [photo/ video] we sit to listen to a story....where do you hear a story? This is where we eat our lunch ... do you sit at a table to eat lunch? Look at how we ..wash our hands...how do you ?

Suggest parents walk past school over the summer break ... Can you see....?

Photographs of things they might see by school.. I spy by school... a post box.

Parents:

- Online powerpoint , vodcast or video to share the new parents meeting information

This list accompanies the transition guidance at <https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/education/children-and-young-peoples-send-service/early-years-send-team-2/early-years-advice-sheets/> and resources at www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc

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- Zoom style group chats which cover FAQs
- Parent advocates who have 'graduated' and can be contacts for new parents
- 5 minute calls to each parent if they would like it
- How can parents ask questions before children start? How will they tell you about their child?
- Can you organise a message from the child's previous setting ..hoping the children have a great day?
- If you are able to, send videos and pictures to the parents e mails or make a book to post, or for parents to download, which outlines these key points?
- Can you do a vodcast for children with these images? Can parents send in questions that the children would like answers to ahead of the 'publication' so you can add information?
- You will be asking parents to share information about their child and their likes and dislikes. If we know a little about the child before they start we can be mindful of their interest and fears to adapt their first experiences and aid continuity. Can you set up your electronic assessment tool earlier for 2 way communications?
- You will need to consider how to support children who cannot access online resources.

- Send a welcome postcard or welcome pack to each home with links to useful information – in case they have not been contactable or have missed the e communications.
- Tomorrow- ahead of day one, *your child will*a walk through the session with images... they will need to choose what they would like for lunch – this is the lunch board in the hall but teachers will ask what they want each morning and help them remember in the early days, it would be best if you – helped them settle at an activity before you tell them you will see them later....etc

Could you?

Have a teddy bears picnic – at a set time/ day where children can 'join in' at home?

Fly by- invite a few children every day to walk by if they can...at a time you are outside and can wave at them. You may be able to display –*Flybye First School welcomes ...Lisa, Clair and Tim.*

Prepare a vodcast welcome / reminder message for before the start of autumn term

Share ideas for home learning -

https://www.skipforeyeducators.co.uk/booklet/covid19_familybooklet_poster.pdf

Set an 'at home' activity which they share with you – and you respond to ☺

<https://www.hertsforlearning.co.uk/leadership-and-management/early-years-improvement-services/transition-project>

There are further ideas as case studies in <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/case-studies-remote-education-practice-for-schools-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

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