**A Checklist to support with transition**

‘*Transitions should be seen as a process not an event, and should be planned for and discussed with children and parents. Settings should communicate information which will secure continuity of experience for the child between settings’*.

(Early Years Foundation Stage Practice Guidance, 2008)

It is important to be well prepared and plan ahead to ensure transition is as seamless as possible for children and their families. Always start by thinking about the process from the perspective of the child and their parents and imagine how they might be feeling. Their voice is important in any decision making.

Refer to your setting procedures around Transition. You may consider developing a policy if you do not currently have one. *The National Strategies ‘Social and Emotional Aspects of Development’* (page 52) provides examples of information which you might include in a policy. Everyone should be aware of the setting policy if there is one.

**When children are moving between rooms/ groups within the setting:**

* The key person should be identified in advance (if the key person is not moving with the child). Introduce the child’s parents to their new Key Person.
* It is beneficial for the new key person to spend some time with the child in their current room if possible
* The child’s current/previous and new key person should meet and talk about the child. The child’s Learning Journey could be shared and conversations take place around the child’s interests, characteristics of effective learning, abilities and needs
* If a SENCo is involved, ensure they meet and talk with the new Key Person
* Keep parents well informed throughout the stages of the transition process, so that they are aware of any changes to their child’s day, eg. if their child will be having any ‘settling sessions’ in their new room.
* Having something familiar in the room (particularly a favourite resource/ toy of the child/ren can be comforting and reassuring.
* Review the environment and make sure it ‘fits the child’
* Ensure that the child and family feel a sense of ‘belonging’ in their new environment. Their photograph and/ or name may be on display, along with the rest of the group.
* Make sure the children have been introduced to others in the room and are shown around.
* Take time to observe and allow the child to explore, whilst being on hand to reassure, comfort and support the child.

**When children are new to your setting:**

* It is helpful to communicate with staff at the child’s previous setting, before the child joins you if possible.
* Ask parents whether they have a Learning Journey (or similar) from the previous setting, to share with you (unless this is being passed on by staff)
* If possible, offer to visit the child in their previous/ current setting. Spend time observing, talking to the child/ren and with staff.
* Invite the child and family into the setting to spend some time becoming familiar with the physical environment, staff and children. This will prepare them for their first day. Show the child where they will keep their belongings and where they will be based. Inform parents of the routines in the setting. Take a photograph of the child so that they will feel a sense of belonging when they arrive for their first day.
* In advance, provide the child and parents with a child and parent-friendly booklet/information about the setting to look at (perhaps two separate booklets if appropriate). It is nice to include a photograph of the child’s key person, so that they can become familiar and make the link when they arrive at the setting. Could children who currently attend the setting be involved with the contents of the booklet (e.g. photographs of their favourite things in the setting, their own drawings or sharing with you ideas of what is important for new children to know).
* Plan a home visit to the family home if this is part of the transition process in your setting.
  + A positive aspect of the Early Years Foundation Stage to school transition project by Carousel Children’s Centre is that
  + *‘Home visits by the school are discussed at the cluster meetings with pre-schools, where the school explores how to develop the visits so they are not intrusive. By all professionals working together, parents’ and carers’ anxieties are managed well.’*
* Either through the home visit, the child’s visit to the setting or a questionnaire/ ‘All about me’ sheet, gather information about the child’s likes, dislikes, interests and routines. This could even be completed prior to the visit to provide a basis for discussion. Look at and use this information to inform planning for the child until observations have been made in the setting.
* If you are know that the child has special educational needs or disabilities, involve the SENCo from the start, enabling them to build a relationship with parents.
* Audit the environment and check whether adaptations are required in order for it to be suitable for the child/ren.
* If the child is two years old, check whether their Progress check has been completed
* If you hold a meeting for all new parents, consider whether a smaller group could be most effective in meeting all of their needs.
* Make sure that parents feel listened to and reassured. They can feel as anxious as the child, if not more.
* Ensure that the key person is able to greet the child and family on their first day and welcome them into the setting. Allow parents time to help their child settle into the setting before leaving. The key person should then feedback to parents at the end of session/day.
* Reflect on how the setting appears/ sounds to new children and parents
* Make sure that everything is ready for the child, so that they immediately feel welcome. Do they have a place to hang their belongings or a name/picture to find?
* Display photographs of the child/family in the setting. Photographs of the setting could also be shared by the child at home. They might enjoy taking their own photographs and creating a book.
* If appropriate, introduce the child to a ‘buddy’ in the setting.
* Ensure that the routine is communicated to the child throughout the session/ day so that they know what is happening and that they feel comfortable. Some children benefit from a visual timetable.
* Provide the opportunity for parents to ask questions, both verbally and through written methods. Make sure that parents are aware of the ways in which they can ask questions. This should be continuous.
* Check that there are sufficient numbers of adults, to enable staff to have the time to spend supporting the child/ren and families.
* Invite parents/ carers in to the setting, for open sessions or Stay and Play, to allow them to become familiar with the routines and activities on offer and to get to know staff. They might use these opportunities for asking questions or sharing useful information. Inviting parents in as often as they wish might be helpful for some.
* Remember that ‘one size doesn’t fit all’- the transition process may need to be flexible, to suit the unique child and family. Some children take longer to settle and different approaches/ extending settling period might be helpful.
* If there is a group of children joining you, suggest that their thoughts and feelings about moving are captured and shared with you, for example through video, drawing, telling an adult who records through writing. You will hopefully have an idea of what they are looking forward to and what they may feel anxious about.
* Make sure you are aware of any other professionals who are working with/ supporting the child and whether the child will be attending any other settings. Continue to work closely and consistently with any partners.
* Be aware that some families might be new to the area. Others may need additional support. Consider what is in place to support parents and make sure practitioners know where to signpost them for further support.
* Continue to update parents on their child’s progress, especially within the first few weeks.

**When children are moving from your room/setting to another room/setting:**

* Ensure all records and Learning Journeys are up to date and pass on either directly or via parents, providing there has been consent to share information.
* Have a conversation with the receiving staff/setting. If they haven’t contacted you, be pro-active in making a phone call to them.
* Offer to visit the setting if it would help, in order to talk with the child’s new key person. In some cases it might be helpful for the child and family for you to accompany them when they visit.
* Offer to loan some resources for familiarity, or allow children to choose something to borrow and take with them.
* Talk to children and find out how they feel about moving to their new environment. If a large group of children are moving, these thoughts could be captured through video and shared with the staff to whom the children will be moving to. Reassure children and talk positively about their transition.
* Make sure that parents know they can approach you for support. They might appreciate talking to a familiar adult who they trust and even having someone to accompany them when visiting a new environment.
* Involve the child in the process and provide reassurance to them.
* Acknowledge that they are ‘graduating’ or leaving the setting and mark this either with a party or by presenting a souvenir scrapbook. Celebrate each child’s achievements in the setting/room.

In addition to this checklist, there are other resources which you may find useful:

*SEN and Disability in the Early Years Toolkit*

<http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/06/Section-10-Transitions.pdf>

*Primary National Strategy- Seamless Transitions*

<http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Seamless_Transition.pdf>

Ofsted *Early Years Foundation Stage to school transition project: Carousel Children’s Centre*

The National Strategies – Early Years *Social and Emotional Aspects of Development*