**Getting ready to return *to an educational setting***

**Can you…**

* Have brief small group discussions or 1.1 chats with both children and parent/carers, and use other means such as painting, junk modelling, playdough, small world play-to find out from children what they miss most about being at their educational setting, or about being in their usual space with the whole peer group and usual staff team?
* Find out what children have most enjoyed about being at home or in a different group?
* Give children some ideas, and the opportunity to talk in small groups with their peers, about what they want to do during their first week back? Start something remotely, or in their current group, to return to or continue once the children are all together again. Collect photos from children’s home learning, or different group learning, to share when they are all back together.
* Explore what children or parent/carers might be worried, or unsure about, in terms of returning? Do they have questions about their first day/week/month/term back?
* Use this information to inform the offer for children upon their return.
* Film the entrance that children will use, their pegs, learning environment, teaching staff, toilets, lunch and outdoor spaces to reassure children that they remain unchanged.
* Consider how to communicate with children about what their first day will be like: who will greet them, and what will happen during that first hour? Explain/present/use puppets or stories to explore how the rest of the day will go.
* Create digital learning role play (cut a hole in large cardboard boxes so that children can sit either side). Children can then re-enact their online learning experiences. Some children may have to return to remote learning again at some point.

**Things to consider…**

* The experiences that children have had during the last year will have an impact on their sense of assurance and trust. School, or their Early Years provider, were supposed to be a constant in their lives.
* Most children who are now in the EYFS were affected by the first lockdown when schools and Early Years providers were closed. When they returned many children came back to a different room or layout, as well as teaching staff, toilets, lunchtime and outdoor arrangements, routines, expectations, and parent/carers and other grown-ups wearing face masks. For some children, this will have been a very challenging time.
* As a result, some children may now be daunted by the prospect of such changes again upon their return. However, in most cases, this time, children will be returning to the same set up that they left at the end of the Autumn term. We need to help them to understand this.

**Remember…**

Transition is a process that is to be considered over time. We don’t know *when* exactly the children will return, or *whether*  their attendance will be interrupted again, but what we do know is that transition is a **significant experience** for all children, and especially the most vulnerable. Yet again, we are asking our young children to leave things (people, places, comforts) behind to encounter something new/change.