

Transitions in early years.

The importance of communication.



A handbook for transition into nursery for early years practitioners.

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Introduction.

Early years practitioners should take a holistic approach to child development.

Birthto5matters (n.d) expresses that Every child is unique and early years practitioners must consider the whole child at the Centre of their development, children develop differently, and it is important as a practitioner to consider the many influences that play a role to which a child develops.

This handbook will give practitioners information about child development and how it links to transitions.

This handbook will be based on a child starting nursery and transitioning from sole care at home to a setting and how to support a child holistically using relevant sources, evidence, and theories, the handbook will also provide information on how to support a child through many life and developmental transitions and look at how many factors influence transitions.

Practitioners need to explore a range of theories proposed to explain child development. Lindon, (2010).

What are Transitions?

Transitions are moves and changes that occur in a child's life and these can be seen to happen day to day, from one place to another, from one person to another or from one activity to another, sometimes these transitions are happy and exciting events however sometimes a child may find these transitions difficult and quite overwhelming. (Rosati,2022). Transitions can also mean changes in a child's home life which may require support from an early-year practitioner.

Trying together(n.d) state that Common transitions in childhood can include; starting nursery or preschool, changes in a child's routine, stopping one activity to begin another, potty training, weening and from crawling to walking, transitions could also mean moving house, a bereavement of a loved one, separation/divorce of parents or caregivers or new additions to the family. Transitions begin as soon as life begins, and children often come across lots of changes before they have even started school, Dunlop (2018) states that a child does not function in

isolation and a child's family, environment and community will have an influence in how a child copes with transitions.

Why are transitions important?

Transitions can be described as an ongoing process and are milestone events that can influence a child's development. They are seen as an opportunity for growth but also in times of uncertainty, early years matters (n.d). Effective transitions are an important foundation for learning, to promote wellbeing and improve a child's confidence during changes, transitions allow children to feel a sense of belonging and to gain positive relationships in the setting (www.education.act.gov.au, n.d.). The way transitions are handled could significantly impact a child's ability to cope with change, short or full term.

According to Truyens (2019.) Schlossberg's transition thoughts define transition as an event or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles. Schlossberg describes several types of transitions to be separated into anticipated events, ones that one expects to occur – (home to nursery) and unanticipated events that may be considered not predictable or expected like a death of a loved one.

Anon (n.d). Shares that children who successfully transition from home to their early years setting are more likely to feel connected and could thrive and develop socially and emotionally Aswell as supporting the child's wellbeing.



[The needs of the child.](#)

According to Davy and Gallagher (2006) The way in which a child settles into a nursery setting can depend on the child's age, stage of development, and previous experience and Hei schools, (2022). State that Taking an integrated approach to a child's need means not just supporting their academic abilities but considering the child as a whole. Holistic development is the social, emotional, physical, mental, and intellectual growth of a child.

[Attachment.](#)

Mcleod, (2023). Explains that John Bowlby theory of attachment suggests that as soon children are born, they are biologically programmed to form attachments with others because this will simply help them survive, Bowlby's model is a cognitive framework and shows that for the child to understand the world their self and others is based on the relationship with the child's primary care giver, Bowlby's work also argues that the fear of strangers represents an important survival tool built by nature. Mcleod (2023) also states that John Bowlby's findings after observing some children were that even when a child formed a relationship with other caregivers it did not diminish the child's anxiety.

Robinson, Segal and Jaffe, (2021). Explain that attachment is a bond or emotional connection formed with the child and their primary carer and that the quality of

the bond can sometimes determine how children respond to people and their social surroundings.

ASPE. (n,d). State There can be seen to be four types of attachment styles – secure, avoidant, ambivalent and disorganized Aspe (n.d) also express that children with secure attachments seem to form basic trusts are more responsive are happy to explore, feel safe and secure. However, Allarakha(,n.d) shares that children with avoidant attachments may look like they want to be alone but in fact do want to bond, the child may avoid eye contact or seem withdrawn and quiet or may not explore as much as a secure child. cherry (2023). suggests that a child that's formed an ambivalent attachment may often feel anxious or sometimes sensitive and the child simply will not be having their needs met, very well mind (n.d) explain that a disorganized attachment can sometimes see the child having conflicting behaviors, the child can seem depressed, passive angry or unresponsive.

This is why it is important for a practitioner to establish the needs of the child.

Essex county council (n.d) state that;

The early years foundation stage (eyfs) sets standards for early years workers and the framework provided ensures the needs of each child are met and a good foundation for a good future through life.

The early years framework suggests that in order to meet the needs of the child one should provide quality and be consistent in settings, this ensures a child makes progress and every child is included, that learning opportunities are developed through planning around the needs of each individual child and should be assessed and reviewed regularly .The framework also states that working in partnerships between the early years worker and parents/carers is equally important as well as always allowing equal opportunities for each Individual child.



-Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relationships, (2009)

[How can we meet the needs of a child during transition into nursery?](#)

Hildebrand, (2023,). The child should be allowed the time to explore their unfamiliar environment. They should be able to ask questions and explore freely. This enables the child to express themselves, this may be through imaginative play, physical activities or being creative.

Structural learning(n.d) suggests that Continuous provision and a range of areas in a setting that are familiar to the child may help the child's transition to nursery, researchers have found that continua's provisions support holistic development in early years children, these may include;

Home corners, reading areas, building areas and creative areas.

For example, if a child showed a lot of interest in the home corner area it could be considered to be beneficial to spend time with the child in that area, according to NI direct (2018) play improves the cognitive, physical social and emotional wellbeing of a child and it also builds Childrens confidence if they are doing an activity that makes them happy.

'Play-based approaches can be seen as fundamental to successful learning in the early years'

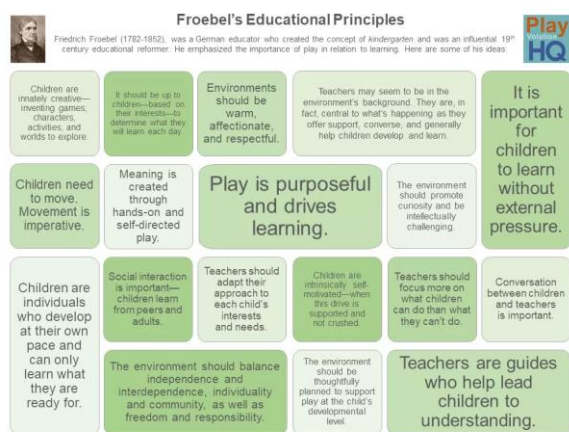
(Froebelian futures n,d.)

Friederich Froebel.

Friederich Froebel laid the foundations for modern education based on the idea that children have unique needs and callabilities.

Through Frobel's research his findings were that a child learns as whole beings and that feelings and actions go hand in hand. Froebelian features (n,d)

According to Early years matters (n.d) Froebel believed that play is in fact a way in which a child will express themselves freely and through direct experience a child will develop their own understandings, Froebel based his work on observing children and this can be suggested to have changed the way in which early years settings changed the way in which they thought about children's play. In childcare settings practitioners observe children regularly this helps the practitioner to plan relevant and suitable activities and play experiences based on the Childs individual interests and needs.



This image shows Froebel's educational principles.

Source (playvolution no date.)

According to Bruce (2020) the right to play is stated in the UN convention on the rights of a child, Frobel encourages play around nature and risk taking which gives

the child the opportunity to learn through their findings and connectivity to the outside world and their real-life experiences.

How can we use Froebel's approach in a childcare setting?

Tovey(n,d). States that settings should allow a child to think for themselves and share their ideas, make their own choices with a range of opportunities and resources and provide indoor and outdoor free play, Tovey also suggest that children should take part in challenging tasks and states adults should consider allowing the child to use real tools, guiding them safely.



source www.oacas.org, n.d.)

The role of the adult in transitions.

Birth to 3 matters(n.d)The key to high quality experiences for children in settings is ensuring continuity between home and the nursery setting, birth to 3 matters(n.d) state that it is the responsibility of all early year's practitioners to make the child feel welcome and are eased into nursery life with a sense of belonging to help the child settle happily, however some children may feel anxious so as a practitioner being warm, listening and responding and working with other professionals is essential especially in which it is important as this will help recognize challenges and additional needs a child may have.

According to Yelland and Waghorn (2020),From the moment a child begins their transition to into nursery they have already formed a bond or attachment with at least one caregiver this will contribute towards the relationships made with early years worker or peers in nursery therefore it is important that the early years practitioner creates a positive relationship with the child's caregiver from the beginning of the transition process. According to Gov.wales(n,d.) flying start state the following should be expected from the early year's practitioner;

Staff should be trained suitably and hold the relevant qualifications; early years practitioners should have an in-depth understanding of how in which a child develops and should be responsive and sensitive to every child and their different and unique needs. The practitioner should ensure the environment for the child is caring and stimulating and children should always feel valued and respected. All activities and play experiences should be planned to meet each child's needs.



Conn(2021).

Maslow's theory

according to cfi (2022) Maslow's framework states from the bottom up that the needs of a child are physiological, safety, love and belonging self-esteem and self-congratulation. Maslow's order begins with the most basic need before moving onto more advanced needs. Maslow's theory remains current and popular in early years settings to date, Maslow originally believed that before a child has fully satisfies an only then can they move onto the next level, however a more modern perspective is that these needs overlap and in early years settings and education a person-centered approach should be used and this we help establish the need of each individual child.

How can we apply Maslow's theory into early years settings?

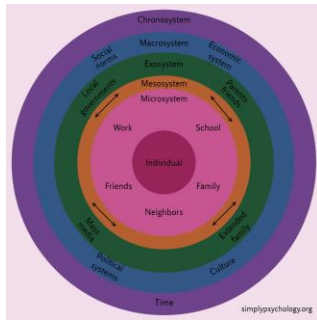
Early years educator (no date) suggests that for a child to reach their full potential we use a comprehensive approach based on Maslow's theory

Physiological level- are children within the childcare setting getting their basic needs? These can be nutritious food, warmth, and shelter. Has the child got regular access to water? Has the child got a comfortable place for an opportunity to sleep if it needs be?

Safety level- do the children feel secure? Is there stability for the child? Is the setting ensuring they safeguard children in their care? This level could also be a time to reflect on the settings daily routine and how it supports each child's need. Social level-is the child being listened to too? Are their views valued? Does the professional respect the child and their needs are there a sense of professional love between the early years worker and said child? Does the child have the opportunity to build relationships with peers, staff, and their keyworker?

Esteem and self-actualization levels- does the practitioner or setting praise and congratulate the child show the child respect and allow the child to evaluate their own achievements?

Bronfenbrenner's theory



Source simplypsychology (no date).

Bronfenbrenner's theory

Cherry (2023) explains that Bronfenbrenner's model is a framework that helps one understand the systems that influence human development particularly the social aspect and environment based around the child, the diagram shows the areas of each zone.

The role of the adult is having an understanding that the child's network interlinks

According to Kindley (2021) early years practitioners should use

Bronfenbrenner's theory and states that regardless of any changes in curriculum being aware of how a child develops is the key and taking all the systems stated the role of the adult whether that is the early years practitioner or a parent /carer or anyone else with who is involved with the child plays a big part of the child's development .

Partnerships

Communication between the setting and the parents/carer are essential in effective positive transitions

Pacey(2015) suggests that a key worker system should be put in place, and this will be the main person to engage in communication with the child and parent to form a bond and work alongside the parent and child , each time the child comes to visit the setting if feeling combatable it is suggested to increase the length of time in which the child is left and build up to the child eventually staying for the full session. The setting should stay in contact with the child's parent/carer throughout the process and create a familiar environment for the child to help them settle.

Pacey (2015) also suggests that the child brings a familiar item from home like their favorite toy to begin with this can be used as the transitional object.

According to the NSPCC (2021). Attachment theory highlights the importance between the Childs emotional bond with their primary care givers and distribution of this bond can affect a child emotionally and psychologically into adulthood.

Dunlop and Fabian (2007) suggest that practitioners and childcare settings plan and prepare transitions and the Scottish social services council (n.d) suggest we follow ten steps for adequate and positive transitions they are as followed:

- 1.ensure the setting has an agreed transition policy in place.
- 2.There should be effective communication systems in place between the child's home and setting for a smooth transition

3. programmes are planned to enable the child to visit their new childcare setting before beginning their time at the setting.

4. ensure all practitioners listen, respond, and support the child through their anxieties.

5. keyworkers should support and celebrate each child.

6. Practitioners should keep a record and be aware of the requirements for transfer records.

7. practitioners should always involve parents and carers in the transition process

8. colleagues should review transition processes regularly.

9. Practitioners should offer follow-up support.

10. Practitioners should always consult parents with transition policies putting the child at the center.

(Winter, 2017.) suggests that there are multiple ways to create partnership with parents and carers and they can be put into practice whilst the children attend the setting. Daily diaries of the child can benefit both the practitioner and the parent in looking at how the child is progressing within their transition period and the rate of the child's development.

Parents meetings parents' meetings allow the practitioner to have a more in-depth talk about the child's development and allows the parents and setting staff to raise any concerns, it also ensures staff and parents are communicating.

Multi agency work.

According to Express and Abhay (2023), multi-agency working within a setting benefit everyone involved with the child, sharing information develops a shared vision, the setting will get mutual support and a coordinated response. Multi-agency work involves several professionals working together to get the best for the child, their wellbeing and for their development.

Nspcc (2023) state that it is important for practitioners to work together to gain a full overview of the child, sharing and collaborating between agencies can help keep children safe and get them the relevant support if they are not reaching their developmental milestones.

Some of the agencies a practitioner in nursery may collaborate and work with may be social services, dieticians, health visitors the inclusion team, speech, and language specialists.

Practitioners use the Reggio Emilia approach in working in partnership's, Reggio Emilia focuses on collaborative learning and explains how children learn through cooperating with their teachers and peers using long term projects based on a child's interests (umdearborn.edu,n.d.) practitioners should observe all children and work in close connection with parents to understand how each child learns. Teachers then plan and adapt the learning process, activities and resources appropriately based on the child's interests, and work with other agencies to provide a way of learning that is seen to benefit the child with the best outcome. Berg, Viktor (2023).



Source healthcare (2019).

Interventions.

Early interventions in childcare settings can benefit a child hugely NSPCC (2023) state that through research identifying needs can positively influence a child's wellbeing and decrease risks that may be affecting a child negatively. The NSPCC suggests that early interventions can reduce the need for certain referrals, improve the child's long-term outcomes, protect the child from harm and finally support the child's strengths and prepare them for adult life.

Practical ideas that could support positive transitions.

Patel (2019) suggests several ideas that would benefit positive outcomes in transitions from home to nursery, it is suggested that practitioners

- *Plan and make transitions a priority, ensuring that the children and families concerns are valued and discussed. This supports the wellbeing of the child.
- *Provide welcome packs or letters to families ensuring key dates and information is available for parents or carers.
- *Plan for the child and their family to visit their new setting.
- *Regular assessments and observations will help share vital information about a child and will help if any relevant interventions are needed.

*Ensure all areas are made available and accessible for children and their families.

*Welcome and goodbye songs provide familiarity Aswell as designated coat pegs with pictures of the child.

The setting should adapt their nursery routine to enable the child to stick with their home routine, this may benefit a positive transition making the environment feel like home from home.

Childcare settings use daily logs and reports to allow parents and carers to know how the child is getting along in nursery daily, this procedure can be seen to help make positive communications between the setting and families and be beneficial in positive transitions as valuable information is being shared which shows the child is being valued and treated as an individual.

My name is: I am a boy/girl My home language is:	I like to eat: I don't like to eat:
 What helps me go to sleep or settle, have I got a comfort item?	I may need help with: 

	I enjoy playing with:
 I am allergic to:	When I have my nappy changed  please use:

Flying start (n,d).

*Above shows a chart flying start use as a child starts day care or creches which enables the practitioner to establish the individual needs of the child.

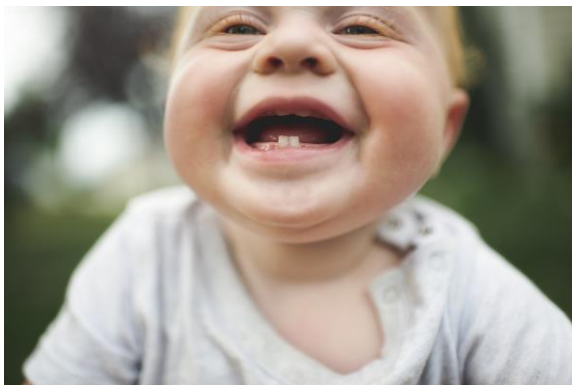


Proposed outcomes.

According to gov.wales(2014)

Flying start state that effective transitions are at the highest quality when they are supportive and inclusive.

Welsh government (2022) explain that the new curriculum will shape children with some of the best ideas from research, and positive transitions should see confident and capable children who are reaching developmental milestones,



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