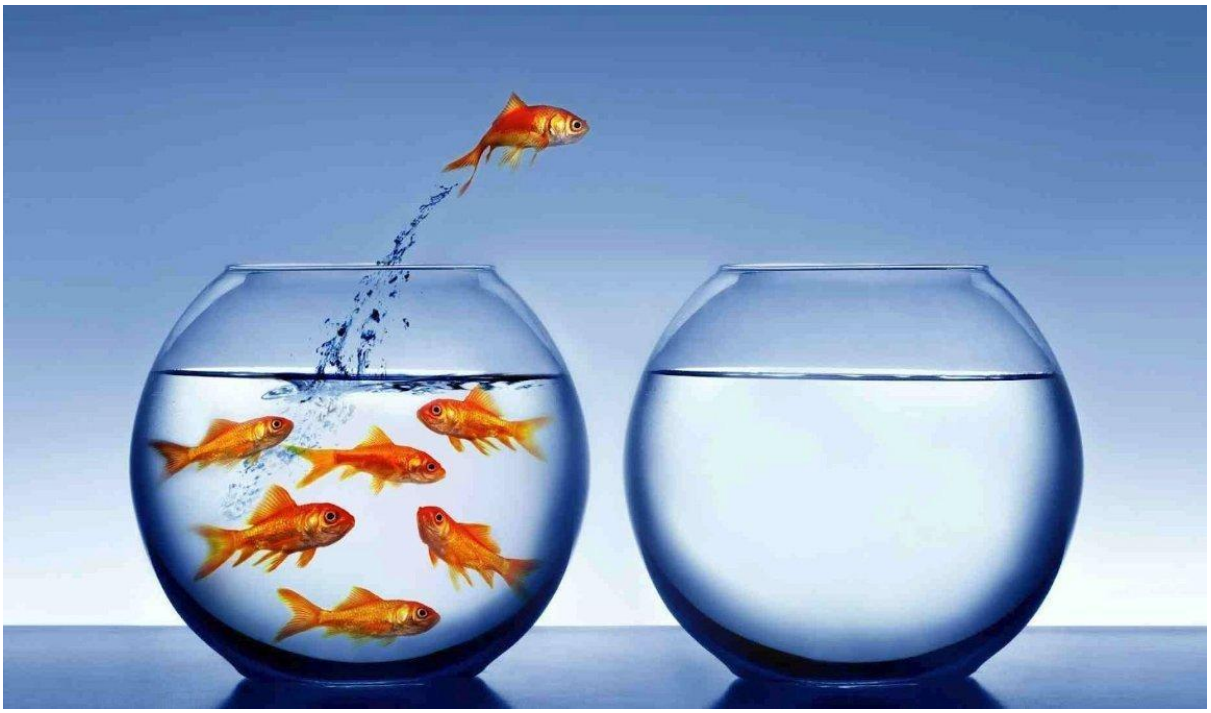
3208 words. Student number- 2107710

A guide to children's transitions into school.



(Ewy, 2016)

The importance of effective communication for young children's learning and development during transitions.

Contents page

1. Introduction
i. Purpose of the handbook
ii. Who is it aimed at?
iii. How will it affect children's outcomes and improve quality?
iv. What are transitions?
v. Why are they important?
2. The Role of the Adult
i. Staff responsibilities
ii. Parents responsibilities
iii. Working together
iv. Effective communication
v. Creating a nurturing environment
3. The Needs of the Child
i. What do children need in times of transition?
ii. Attachment theory
iii. Developmental theory
iv. Secure relationships
4. Interventions
i. Ideas that can support positive transitions
ii. conclusion
5. Reference List

Introduction

Purpose of the handbook

This handbook aims to help key workers in early years setting understand the importance of effective communication for young children during their transition from a pre-school setting into school.

who is it aimed at?

This handbook is aimed mostly at practitioners working in the early year's settings dealing with children transitioning from pre-school into school. Key workers at Settings that offer a wraparound service to school children will see lots of children in their transitions into school. This handbook serves as a guidance to these key workers to help them through the child's transitions, the needs of the children through their transitions, their role as practitioners and the role of the adults in the child's life.

How will it affect children's outcomes and improve quality?

This handbook aims to guide practitioners in a way to improve children's transitions and give all children a positive experience while transitioning into school and improve the quality in the way practitioners can help the children and families through these experiences.

What are transitions?

A transition is a significant change from one stage or experience to the next. Children experience lots of different transitions and circumstances that can affect them in different ways. These transitions and changes in a child's life require support to help them deal with these changes in their life. (Clarke, 2020)

Humans experience transitions all through life, from being a child experiencing the birth of a new sibling, separations of parent's relationships, moving house, death of family members or starting pre-school and school. To then experiencing these transitions and more as adults.

(Clarke, 2020) explains the different areas of development transitions can affect in a child's life. These are, Emotional development which can occur through personal experiences such as parents separating or bereavement. Physical transitions including moving to new educational settings or moving homes. Intellectual changes such as the transition from pre-school into school. And, physiological which can be caused medical transitions or puberty.

When supporting children through the different transitions they may face, they must be supported before, during and after this transition period as a lack of support in important transitions of a child's life can sometimes lead to negative log-term affects.

Why are they important?

Croner-I (2019) explains that a child's first transitions in life can affect the way a child copes with situations in the future, therefore it is important that key workers and the people in the child's life support them through their transitions and obstacles they may face. Brooker, L (2008) describes the transition from home to educational and care settings one of the biggest changes of social change for young children and says that as most women in society now work full time, it Is more common for children in the early years to enter care settings, requiring practitioners in the early years to reconsider children's developmental stages. Children attending pre-school settings will experience lots of transitions through their time in care and educational settings being from day-care to pre-school, nursery to reception class, foundation stage to primary school, primary school to secondary and from secondary to college. Many Transitions In a child's life may seem easy and normal, however these events are important milestones for children and impact on their development and help children grow and learn through their life. Early Years Matters (2020) states that a child's transitions should not be seen as an event that involves the child, but as a process in the child's life and is an ongoing journey rather than a destination.

3208 words. Student number- 2107710

The role of the adult during a child's Transition

Staff responsibilities

A child's best chances of a good and easy transition revolves around the relationship between the key worker and the child. By the adult initiating a relationship with the child they will help the child gain trust and confidence in the adult and form a relationship with them and let them know what suits their needs best. Clarke (2020) says that good practice when supporting children's transitions include working with the adults in the child's life to plan for the transition and support the child, spending one-to-one time with the child letting them express themselves and getting to know their likes and dislikes, approaching the transition topic through story books, and seeking additional support from other professionals.

Parents responsibilities

A child's transition into school can often be worrying for the parents/carers and is also a transition for the parents as well as the children. If a parent is feeling anxious about their child transitioning, these emotions can transfer onto the child making them feel nervous while going through their transition into school. It is important parents know and understand the importance of being positive around their child is, so the child can freely enjoy their transition. (Thomas, E. 2019) Practitioners should reassure parents about their child's transition, letting them know they will be a part of it and will be kept up to date throughout the child's time at the setting and that their opinions will be valued and taken into consideration.

Working together

As young children experience the transition from pre-school to nursery, it is up to the adults such as practitioners and carers to ensure this transition is planned and supported and to consider the affects these transitions have on the children's development and learning, self-identity, and social competence. (Brooker, 2008). While settling in a child through their new transition there

must be a relationship between the key worker and the parents. Parents often need reassurance as much as the children in some cases, and as described by Brooker L (2008) a child's transition into a new setting often has a big impact on their parents, it is also said that the parents are the 'expert' of their own child, whilst the practitioner is the 'expert' of children in general, and the parent and practitioner must learn to work together with trust and respect for one another for the best transition possible for the child and the parent.

Effective communication

Communication is key when supporting the transition of children into school.

> practitioners should effectively communicate and build relationships with the parents and families of the child. If parents need support through these transitions, it can be arranged to show them around the new environment to help them feel more at ease during the experience. Transition meetings can be arranged to communicate with the families and as many professionals involved with the child. This will serve as an opportunity for anybody to discuss the child's development from their view and can enable practitioners to support their development. A plan can be made from these meeting of how to create a positive transition for the children and families and to offer the correct support. (Earlyyearscareers.com. 2021.)

Creating a nurturing environment

Leo, P talks about the importance a child's environment can be for them. Firstly, explaining how children thrive outdoors and time spent outdoors can help them eat better, sleep better and are happier. While children experience transitions that may be difficult for them, it is important to give them the opportunity to do things they enjoy such as playing outdoors. It is important to create a safe and nurturing environment at the setting, as this will help the children feel comfortable arriving and spending time at the setting. Hunter, C. (No Date) explains that the environment in the setting can affect one's emotional wellbeing, including children, parents, or staff. It is suggested to

create a sense of organisation to make a structure in a child's life, this can contribute to a sense of safety for the child and can help a child through their transition period knowing that they are in a safe and nurturing environment.

The needs of the child

What do children need in times of transitions?

When children are going through transitions it is important to prepare them for it, doing so, they will know what is expected and what they need to do making the transition smoother. Children who are going through transitions need to be supported, well cared for, and nurtured. Making the child feel safe and supported will help with their anxiety through the transition process. The child needs somebody to be aware of their development and what they need during their transition. The child also needs a safe and welcoming environment where they feel comfortable during the transition. (PennState Extension, no date) meeting the needs of the child is the most important part during a child's transition, a child centred approach should be always taken, ensuring the children are respected, their views are heard, they have stable, trusting relationships with professionals and their individual needs are supported and met. When working with children and supporting them through transitions, all practitioners should follow the equality act 2010 to eliminate discrimination and promote equality throughout the setting. practitioners must also follow the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which protects the rights of the children creating a child centred framework. According to London Child Protection Procedures (2020) children need "Vigilance, understanding and action, stability, respect, information and engagement, explanation, support and advocacy."

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs is a theory explaining the needs of a human, shown in a pyramid of most important needs at the bottom.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs- a pyramid that shows the five tiers of human needs. The five needs from bottom to top of the pyramid are:

•Physiological

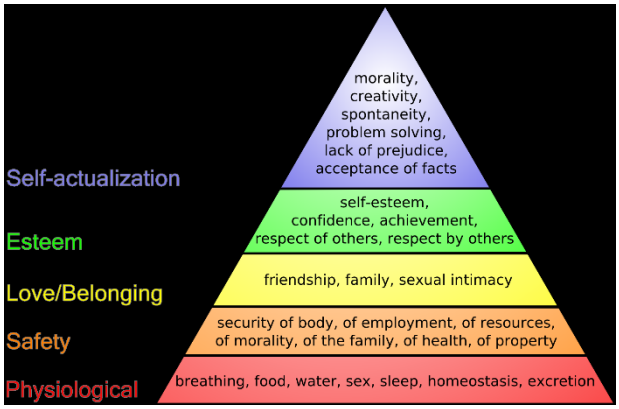
•Safety

•Love and belonging

•Esteem

•Self-actualization

Figure 1 illustrates that the basic needs at the bottom of the pyramid need to be met before the psychological and self-fulfilment needs can be satisfied.



(Finkelstein, J. 2006)

Figure 1 – Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Physiological, safety, love/belonging and esteem are referred to as deficiency needs that are caused because of deprivation which need to be met. Self-actualization is referred to as growth or being needs. Maslow states that the lower needs must be 'more or less' satisfied before developing higher up the pyramid. Progress of meeting the self-fulfilment needs can be disrupted due to not meeting the lower needs. Fluctuations between the levels of the hierarchy can be caused by many things such as personal life experiences. The hierarchy is used as a motivation to satisfy one need before moving onto the next.

Physiological needs- Basic requirements for survival, these are needed for the body to function. These include air, food, drink, shelter, clothing, warmth, sex, and sleep.

Safety needs- Protection such as security, order, law, stability, and freedom from fear.

Love and belongingness- A need for personal relationships and love such as friendships, intimacy, trust, family, and affection.

Esteem needs- One's self-esteem and aspiration for respect and reputation from others as this develops one's own self-esteem and dignity.

Self-actualization needs- Desire to reach one's full potential and to grow as a person.

(McLeod, S. 2007)

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs shows what is needed of a human for them to reach their next goal. Practitioners working with young children must be helping children met all these needs, so they are able to develop further up the pyramid. The 'serve and return' theory shows how interactions from caregivers at a young age can help the child develop. Rosemond, Z. (2018) explains that Interactions between infants and their carers lay solid foundations of future brain development, these interactions are known as serve and return. The three most important aspects of a child's development to shape them for the future are: genetics, environment, and experience. Serve and return can be used when changing nappies, feeding a bottle, or playing on the floor. The caregiver supports the child's development from a young age, by responding when the young child may cry, then giving eye contact, words, or a hug. These interactions cause neural connections to be made which build and strengthen the child's brain. This theory shows the importance of interaction and how meeting the child's basic needs help them develop further.

Attachment theory

John Bowlby's Attachment Theory explains that babies are born able to form attachments with others for their survival. This theory was developed from Konrad Lorenz observation of the animal species and that ducklings form attachments for their survival. He states that forming attachments are instinctive and occur with feelings such as fear, separation, and insecurity. It is explained that children's ability to cry, smile and crawl was developed in the early days of humans as a way to keep parents/ carers close to them and ensuring some contact with an attachment figure. This has evolved in children needing to be near their parents and without them a lack of attachment will be triggered. Five min points of John Bowlby's attachment theory include:

1. Children instinctively need one main attachment figure.
2. Children need care from their man attachment figure for 24 months.
3. A disruption in their attachment can cause aggression, depression, delinquency, reduced intelligence levels and affectionless relationships.
4. A separation from their main attachment causes immediate stress.
5. Children's attachment figure can develop their internal working model.

John Bowlby's attachment theory can be used to reflect on family environments and to maximise the opportunities for children to form connections.

John Bowlby researched into this theory during the bombing of London when children were evacuated, and their main attachment was broken. Although moving to loving homes where they were cared for, there was a noticeable need for their parents or main attachment figure. He investigated the attachment of a baby monkey and its mother, noticing the need of food from their mother but also as a comfort and attachment for the baby. He then observed the similarities of human babies primarily and instinctively needing their mothers for food and survival but challenged the fact that they also

needed an emotional attachment with them by being held, and nurtured. (hrf no date) to further the evidence around attachment theory, Harry Harlow who specialised in infant-caregiver relationships, undertook an experiment using rhesus monkeys. He separated these infant monkeys from their mothers and created two replacement 'mothers', one made of metal but provided milk through an artificial nipple, and one being soft and fluffy however not offering food. The aim of the experiment was to see if the infant monkey would go to the mother that offered no comfort but had food, or if they would cuddle with the mother that was soft and fluffy for comfort. Harlow realised that the infant monkeys used the replacement 'mothers' for their different needs. They would go to the metal monkey to satisfy their primary need for food, however when a loud noise was made to frighten the monkeys they would go to the soft mother for comfort and security. It was concluded from this experiment that human infants need an attachment figure to a maternal caregiver. (Nortje, A. 2021)

Developmental theory

Bronfenbrenner (1979) looks at development through his ecological system theory in figure 2 which investigates the impact of a child's development through their environment. Bronfenbrenner looks at the different layers of an environment and how they each affect the child's development. The layers of these different environments include:

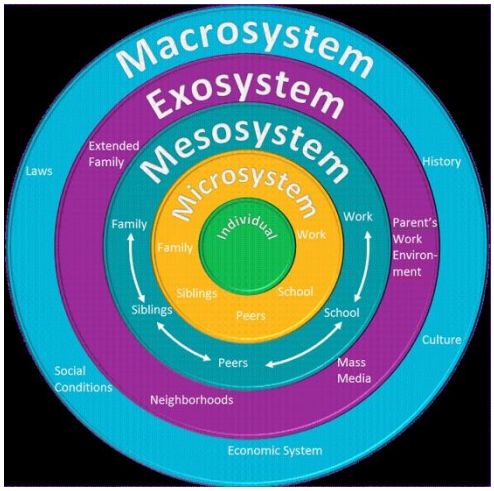
- The microsystem- which is the layer closest to the child and which has direct contact. These include family, school, neighbourhood ad childcare environments.
- The mesosystem- this illustrates the link between the different components of the microsystem. (Berk, 2000)
- The exosysyetm- this layer represents the society in which the child develops. The culture of the child and the community and society in which it lives impact the child's development by influencing the mesosystem (family, school, and religion) and therefore the microsystem (Berk, 2000).
- The macrosystem- this is the exterior layer of a child's environment. The macrosystem has the most far-reaching influence as it impacts the

exosystem, mesosystem and in turn the microsystem and child's development. For example, the negative input of a society into the macrosystem may be met with a negative response from the exosystem which will cascade to the lower layers.

- The chronosystem- changes to the entire system through time, for example, as a child grows, both the influence of the layers and the child's response will change.

(Paqyette, D. Ryan, J. 2001.)

(Bronfenbrenner, U. 1979.)



(Kindergarten, P., 2021.)

Figure 2- Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory.

Eriksons phychosocial developmental theory

Freuds phycosexual developmental theory

Piaget's cognitive developmental theory

<u>Secure relationships</u>

Kelly (2015) says that secure and trusting relationships can help improve a child's development, a child feeling safe and secure in their environment has a positive effect on their emotional wellbeing and development. as John Bowlby explained in is attachment figure, the importance of a children's relationship with their primary care giver impacts their ability to learn social and emotional skills while demonstrating how they view relationships in the future.

Practitionersin the early years must understand that children have only mainly developed relationships with their primary care givers and family members. Therefore, it is important to build a trusting rapport with these children who are out of their comfort zones and likely feeling nervous. Key workers can get to know these children and create secure relationships, so the child feels safe and happy at the setting. this will help children though their transitions as they will get to know their key workers and other children and staff around them.

Interventions

Ideas that can support positive transitions

According to oxford county council (2017) key principles that can support positive transitions for young children moving into school include:

- Recognising that each child is unique and supporting them in a way best for the individual child. Take into consideration if a child has an additional learning need or a child is in care and offer the right support.
- Create positive relationships with the children, families, and carers. Arrange visits with families and carers to ese them into the transition stage. Eary years settings and schools work together to reach each other's aims.
- Create a nurturing and enabling environment so the child feels safe and welcomed through their transition into the setting.
- Consider that children learn and develop differently and at different paces and offer the right support for these individuals, so they experience a positive transition.

conclusion

In summary, Positive experiences during a child's transition into school can have a positive impact on their development and ability to cope with transitions in the future. Practitioners supporting children through these transitions can reflect upon this handbook for a guide on what transitions mean to a child and how they can affect them. Practitioners should understand their role during these experiences and how to help children and families by effectively communicating to the parents and families. the needs of the child should be met, and practitioners must consider developmental stages of individual children and meet their needs accordingly.

References

Berk, L.E. (2000). *Child development (*5th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 23-38

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design.* Harvard university press.

Brooker, L., (2008) *Supporting transitions in the early years*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK). Available at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=AKscJ_UN0JoC&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=transitions+in+the+early+years&ots=yeileEafOX&sig=wOjubPRoi4GigldSRnpJpI7LiRU#v=onepage&q=transitions%20in%20the%20early%20years&f=false (Accessed: 21 November 2021)

Clarke, V. (2020) *twinkl* . Available at: https://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/different-types-of-transitions-in-child-development (Accessed: 21 November 2021)

Croner-I (2019) *Managing transitions in early years provisions.* Available at: https://app.croneri.co.uk/feature-articles/managing-transitions-early-years-provisons (Accessed: 13 November 2021)

Early Years Matters (2020) *Transitions.* Available at: https://www.earlyyearsmatters.co.uk/eyfs/positive-relationships/transitions/ (accessed: 18 November 2021)

Earlyyearscareers.com. (2021). *Supporting SEND transitions through the Early Years.* [online] Available at: <https://www.earlyyearscareers.com/eyc/latest-news/supporting-send-transitions-through-the-early-years/#:~:text=A%20formal%20early%20years%20transition%20meeting%20is%20useful,of%20the%20child%E2%80%99s%20development%20they%20are%20involved%20with.> (Accessed 24 November 2021I.

Earlyyearscareers.com. (2021). *Why secure relationships can help children's development.* [online] Available at: <https://www.earlyyearscareers.com/eyc/early-years-practice/why-secure-relationships-can-help-childrens-development/#:~:text=Secure%20and%20trusting%20relationships%20can%20help%20to%20promote,positive%20effect%20on%20other%20areas%20of%20their%20development.> (Accessed 24 November 2021).

Ewy, L. (2016) *OnWords: Transition* KMUW. Available at: https://www.kmuw.org/onwords/2016-11-29/onwords-transition (Accessed: 21 November 2021)

Finkelstein, J. (2006) *Wikipedia*. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs.png (Accessed 2 November 2021)

Hrf (no date) *John Bowlby's Attachment Theory Explained.* Available at: https://healthresearchfunding.org/john-bowlbys-attachment-theory-explained/ (accessed: 22 November 2021)

Hunter, C. (no date) *Nurturing environments*. Teach Early Years. Available at: https://www.teachearlyyears.com/learning-and-development/view/nurturing-environments (Accessed: 22 November 2021)

Kindergarten, P., (2021). *Special friend's Day*. [online] Petonekindergarten.blogspot.com. Available at: <http://petonekindergarten.blogspot.com/2013/03/special-friends-day.html> (Accessed 23 November 2021).

Leo, P. (1989) *Creating More Nurturing Environments for Children.* The Natural Child Project. Available at: https://www.naturalchild.org/articles/guest/pam_leo3.html (Accessed: 22 November 2021)

London Child Protection Procedures (2020) *a child focussed approach to safeguarding.* Available at: https://www.londoncp.co.uk/child_focussed.html#:~:text=%20A%20child-centred%20approach%20is%20supported%20by%3A%20,an%20international%

20agreement%20that%20protects%20the...%20More%20 (Accessed: 22 November 2021)

McLeod, S., (2007) *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*. Simply psychology, 1(1-18).

Nortje, A. (2021) *Harlow's Monkey Experiments: 3 Findings About Attachment.* PositivePsychology.com Available at: https://positivepsychology.com/harlow-experiment/ (Accessed: 23 November 2021)

PennState Extension (no date) *Understanding Transitions.* Available at: https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare/early-care/tip-pages/all/understanding-transitions#:~:text=Transitions%20require%20young%20children%20to%20put%20forth%20great,to%20transition.%20No%20wonder%20transitions%20can%20be%20challenging%21 (Accessed 22 November 2021)

Rosemond, Z., (2018). *The Importance of Serve and Return in the Infant Classroom Settings*. KÉPZÉS ÉS GYAKORLAT: TRAINING AND PRACTICE, 16(3), pp.45-50.

Ryan, D.P.J., (2001). *Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.* P.2012. Available at: http://www.cms-kids.com/providers/early_steps/training/documents/bronfenbrenners_ecological.pdf (Accessed: 22 November 2021)

Thomas, E (2019) *supporting transitions: Effective partnership working between families, carers and practitioners.* Nursery World. Available at: https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/knowledge-bank/article/supporting-transitions-effective-partnership-working-between-families-carers-and-practitioners (Accessed: 22 November 2021)

Www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk. (2021). [online] Available at: <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreneducationandfamilies/informationforchildcareproviders/Toolkit/goodpractice/EYTransitionPack.pdf> (Accessed 25 November 2021).