

Early Years Handbook for Supporting Young Children Through Transition.

(Source: Early Years Educator Support Group, No date)



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Introduction

Welcome to the handbook that will help early years practitioners have a better understanding on how they can help support young children through transition and to expand their knowledge on what their role is as the adult, what the needs of the child are and what partnerships are formed during a child's transition process. It will also outline possible interventions which will give them more advice and support on knowing the right thing to do for a young child who is going through transition so that they can have the best outcome for that child.

What is Transition?

In the Cambridge dictionary (2022) transition means when someone move's on from one thing or place to another. For a baby or young child this can be leaving family to start a nursery or school, this would be their transition.

According to the New York State (no date), transition is a moving from one thing to another which is referred to as a process rather than the end of something. This is because when you are transitioning it is not the end of a journey or task it is simply moving on to the next stage of the task so for children this will be when they are attending school and at the end of every school year they transition to another class. This stage of a young child's life is their transition process.

In the Sage Journal they have said that when children start their school transition journey this has a long-term effect on their educational achievement and although the partnerships created during this time have an agreement in place on how they are going to help the children they sometimes have very different expectations on what each professional's roles and responsibilities are.

Transitioning from being with family to being left in an environment with practitioners they are unfamiliar with can be a very difficult time for a young child however this transition is something not every child experiences because not every young child attends a nursery setting that is not within the school which can make transitioning to school even harder for them to do. UNICEF article 28 states that all children have the right to education and because of this right it is very important for practitioners to have an understanding of the children and their likes and dislikes so when they start their school or class they can have a plan between them and the child's parents or careers so that the transition is a smooth and stress free process as possible for the young child.



(Source: LINC Consortium 2022)

Role of the adult

During a young child's life, they will experience transitions more frequently due to the number of professionals that are involved in a babies or young child's early childhood stage as well as the number of friends and family that offer their support. Each visit becomes a transition for the young child to deal with.

Children depend on their parent or careers for the important things they need in life, the parent and career have the role of keeping the children healthy and alive. They need to make sure they are providing the main things in life which are love, food, water, stability, warmth, clothes, and opportunities. If a child is happy, feed, watered, full of warmth and love and given opportunities throughout their life then they will grow up to be a confident and well-educated adult. Parents and careers are a child's first educators who play a part in determining how far their children will go in life and that is why the role they have is very important, Bowlby (1907-1990).

Every adult that enters a young child's life play an important role and it is extremely important that they fully understand what their role and responsibilities are as well as knowing the role and responsibilities of others around them.

According to Future Learn (no date) by making sure adults are reliable will result in the child's needs being met and helping them build the valuable skills they will need to help them transition more effectively. Being reliable is a role that every adult involved in a babies or young child's life needs to have and it is extremely important to make sure this is something that practitioners also develop when working with young children. Young children depend on adults around them for everything during the first stages of their life and if the adult they are depending on is not very reliable then this can have a big effect on them when it comes to their needs being met, their development, their relationship building and their trust in people which will make transition's harder for them

Adults supporting children and making sure they feel valued will help them to be able to build positive relationships which have a big impact on the young child's development and social skills. According to the Essex County Council (2022) website on the role of the adult they also outline the importance adults supporting young children in forming positive relationships with other peers as well as the staff within their setting. Adults not only need to support children to build positive relationships, but it is also just as important to make sure practitioners understand the development of children and get to know the children's needs and make sure they are working to meet them. Having good knowledge on a young child's development and their individual needs will help the practitioner and the young child when they are transitioning into their care.

Allowing children to have more real-life experiences is important in their development, as well as allowing children to be children. Adults often follow the new guidelines when it comes down to parenting children or working with children and as most practitioners know some of the guidelines that have been put into practice often take away the allowance to let children be children. They might explain that we need to make sure we take away every danger in a child's way, but children need to experience some dangers to develop important skills and it is the adult's responsibility to make sure these dangers are safe danger for the children. Dewey (1859-1952) also believes that children learn better through doing practical lessons or free play rather than just sitting down at the table reading and writing. Due to his theory, it is shown that teachers are one of the main key factors of a child's development and education. Which is why Dewey (1859-1952) theory is that education should be planned around the real-life situations and be open freely for the children to be able to come and go as they please, by allowing children to be able to go around their classroom freely choosing what they would like to do is teaching the children how to transition from one activity to another as well as transitioning from one group of friends and teacher to another which will make the children feel safe, valued, meet their needs and support them when they have to transition to a new class or a new setting all together.

Being a parent or career means that they have the role and responsibilities to make sure they are taking their child or children to important appointments that they need to attend for example doctor's appointments, health visitor appointments and if they need additional support, they need to make sure they are taking the children to those appointments as well. It is also their role to make sure they are taking the children to parent groups because these groups play an important part in a child's life. They allow the children to see that their closes careers socialise and trust new people which is helping the children to develop good socialising skills and to feel safe around other adults as well. Children look at their parent or careers for reassurance whenever they are doing something new or meeting new people and it is the parent or career's role to make sure they are effectively showing their children that it is ok and normal to make other positive relationships with people other than their parent or career. This will help the child or children to have a less emotional and anxious transitions because they have been doing it from an early stage in their life and they have learnt how to do this from those they trust the most.

The needs of the child

Children have the need of feeling like they belong and during their time in a nursery setting they will always feel like they belong because to be a good and effective practitioner they need to have love for the children in their care, they need to make sure they give equal opportunities to everyone because this will also help them to feel like they belong.

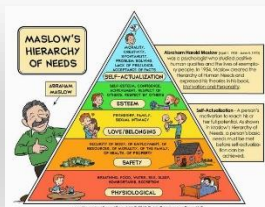
When a new child is starting the setting, it is extremely important for the practitioners with in that setting to read through their profile form and to get a clear understanding of their individual needs, this will help the practitioner when it comes to supporting the child through transition as well as being able to support their parents too.

Children with special needs have more complex needs and practitioners need to be able to meet them and be confident in doing so. If a practitioner is not confident when meeting the needs of a child with special needs then this will result in the child not meeting the full potential and their needs only being half met, it is also important to know what they are supposed to be doing and what they are legally allowed to do. Extra training for practitioners in special educational needs can make sure that all children will have their needs met because practitioners will have the skills and knowledge to be able to carry out what the children need.

Bowlby (1907-1990) stated that he was able to study children's attainment with their mothers for over twenty years and during that time he was able to see how well children develop vital skills to be able to build relationships and to gain the confidence they will need throughout their lives. He stated that children look for their mothers when trying new things to make sure they are always around to help and support them if they need it. The reason they have this attachment with their mothers is because their mother is normally the one who provides them with the basic needs for the first stages of their life. They are the one's who provide water, food, warmth, and unconditional love, as well as being the first person they truly learn to trust.

UNCRC article 24 states that all of children have the right to Health, Food, Water and Environment and the government must work to help to provide these needs to all the children. Although the government have a duty to make sure they are helping families to be able to provide these for the children it is down to their key career to also make sure the children are receiving these, if they struggle to be able to provide these needs they it is in the child's best interests to inform someone with in a professional statues so that they can support the parent or career in making sure these basic needs are being met.

Maslow believed that the needs on the bottom of his diagram should be met before moving on to the next stage which means practitioners should be making sure children can have a drink whenever they need one during their time at the setting, they should be offered a healthy balanced diet to make sure they are getting the nutrition that children need. Not all children will be getting a healthy nutritional diet at home and that is why they have more of a need to have it with in the childcare setting, they also have the need for sleep so this is also very important to know whether they are getting enough sleep at home and whether they are still having naps throughout the day and if they are then practitioners need to make sure they are giving the children the opportunity to sleep. Maslow included are safety needs which are very important because children feel better and happier when they feel safe and secure, some children come from a background where this need is not always being met by their parent or career, so it is vital that they feel like this throughout the day when they are in school or a nursery setting. Social Needs are also a lower need that children should be able to receive when in the care of practitioners, they need to



(Source: Pinterest, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (no date))

Partnerships

Patel (1998-2022) believes that the partnership between parents and practitioners needs to be professional, effective, and strong so that it can help them to build the foundation of effective communication which will result in a stress-free transition for the young child. Patel also said that although the parents take comfort in building positive relationships between them and the practitioner, it is also a big factor in helping a children feel safe and to reassure them if they are suffering from separation anxiety. By having a good relationship between the parents and practitioner means that the needs of the child will be met by each other.

Children will have many transitions throughout the early stages in their life whether it be seeing the health visitor, going to the doctors, or attending a parent and baby class, children will still feel scared or upset by any of those transitions and that is why it is important to make sure the practitioner has good and clear communication skills. Communication is key when it comes to supporting children and their needs and who better to communicate with than their parents. A child's parent knows them better than anyone else and when practitioners work alongside parents it has been proven that their child is more likely to achieve academic skills and keep expanding them for a minimum of two years if not longer. Athey (1981) wrote an article explaining how effective partnerships with parents are, and how the children seem to be able to achieve more because their parents have been able to be a part of their education. Stiner said that children benefit more from having real like features and features that have a home from home feel to it is more likely to have positive transitions because the children will walk in feeling safe and secure.

Working in early years will mean building partnerships with different multi-agency workers, partnerships can be very important when working with children because one profession could have the skills and knowledge another profession doesn't but by working together, they are making sure that between the two professions the child will receive the best outcome.

Nurseries will have to build a partnership with primary schools to make sure when they are handing over a child or picking a child up from school, they are relaying all the relevant and important information to make sure that the child receives the highest quality of care and that they have their needs met. Between a nursery setting and a primary school setting they are the two professions who see the children for the longest period of the time so by building a partnership and having good and clear communication means that each profession can support one another to make transitioning easier for the children.



(Source: National Portage Association. 2019)

Interventions

Over the years many interventions have been implemented to help early years practitioners support children through transition. The aim of the interventions is to keep building positive relationships with parents and carers and can begin before the child enters a strange setting.



(Source: Little interventions Day Nursery, 2019)

Before children start nursery, they will be offered a visit to have a look around the setting and to meet the staff. During this visit the parents or carers will ask questions and receive information about the setting as well as the staff working there. At the end of the visit the parents will be given the opportunity to book their child in for a settling in session that can be anything from one hour to three hours, this will be planned for a week before the child is due to start the setting. The settling in sessions help to support the children during transition and parents can stay with their child but it is advised that they leave so that their child can have a true feel of what their time there will be like. They will also be given a profile form that has areas in there for the parent to fill out giving as much information about their child as possible, this will be things about their medical or allergies, likes or dislikes, toileting requirements, days, and timings and much more. The staff then will be able to read through the profile form to gain a better understanding of the child and this will help them to support the child's transition.



(Source- clipartmax, 2019)

At the end of each day the child's keyworker will meet the parent at the door with their child and give them a handover, they will have a daily log sheet explaining what they have done throughout the day as well as what they have eaten, if they have slept and what their nappies have been. They will pass over any information they feel the parent needs to know that might not be stated on their log sheet and say whether the child has had a good day. By completing this they are building positive relationships with the parents which will make the child's transition easier during their time at the setting.

Proposed Outcomes

Vygotsky once said that children learn more through interactions with adults and real-life objects and that is why as a practitioner it is their duty to make sure their areas in their settings are filled with real life objects as well as books, language area, writing and mark making, maps and diagrams then a child will be more willing to explore those areas meaning they will be becoming more independent and developing their confidence. Once a child is confident in the setting they will want to go and build relationships with friends and other practitioners and start working out who they are as a person and where they fit in. When a child is demonstrating these skills, it will be clear to see that transitioning for them has become successful.

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