

Guidance Handbook For Early **Years Workers Covering Childhood** **Transitions**

“Learning and development are interrelated from the child’s
very first day of life”

-Lev Vygotsky



(Source: The Bite, 2017)

Contents**Page no.**

1- Introduction	3
2- This handbook	3
3- Transitions	4
4- Role of the practitioner	6
5- Theories in practice	8
6- Partnerships	9
7- Needs of the child	10
8- Interventions	12
9- Outcomes	13
10- Reference list	

Introduction

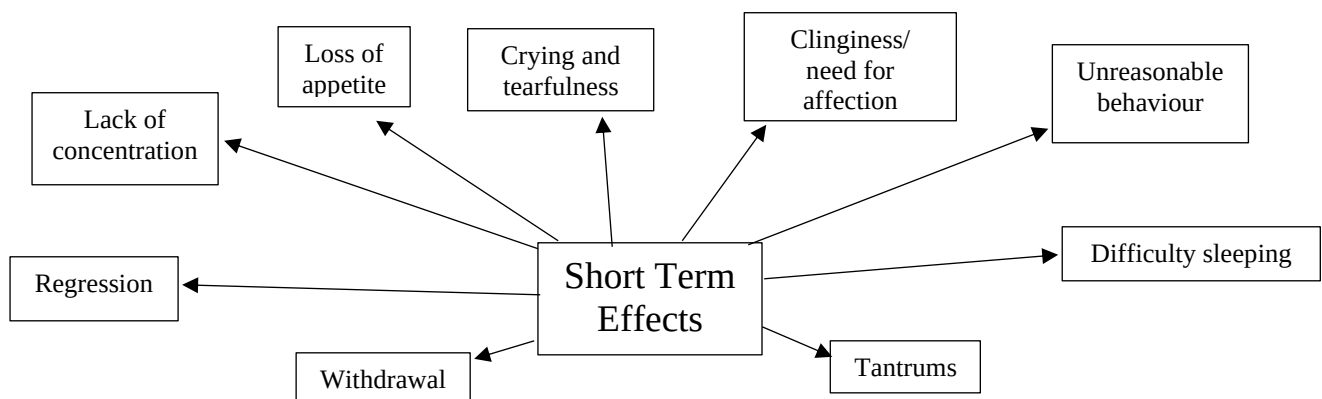
Definition- Movement, Passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another; change: The transition from adolescence to adulthood. (Dictionary.com, 2020)

This Handbook- This handbook is designed for early year practitioner's working with children aged 4+. Through this handbook workers struggling to understand how to support children during the early years stages will be able to learn about different way to support them. The contents of this handbook will include different transitions the child may face at this age and different ways practitioners can support them. Staff will need to show commitment and understanding during these transitions.

Transitions

Children will Face many transitions as they develop. Main ones include starting pre-school, starting nursery, starting reception, starting key stage one and attending extra-curricular activities. However, there are other transitions some children may encounter such as separation or divorce of parents, deceased loved one, and a younger sibling. Going through these transitions can cause a range of emotions and it is essential for early years workers to support the child as well as their family during this process. (Croner-i, 2019)

Transitions can affect children in multiple ways, but the main effects will be on the child's behaviour and development. Some effects will be short term whereas others will be long term. (Beith et al. 2010)



It is key to look out for these short-term effects to avoid long term ones. The most common short-term effect which will affect development is regression. Recognising these will allow it to be easier to support the child through their transition. Transitions can be difficult for children, so it is beneficial to support them. How to support them depends on their age, the difficulty of the change and the suddenness. Taking in new information can be a struggle for everyone so it is beneficial as early years workers to allow children the time to process the information and then be there for them when they seek reassurance and guidance. Telling children “you will love it” should be avoided as it could cause unwanted pressure on them if they are already unhappy. It is vital to be honest with them as this will help develop their trust. Furthermore, timing is beneficial as telling children about change can be hard for both parties. Allow time for them to

process what is happening but not too much time as this will lead to poor concepts of time.

Some transitions can be traumatic for children leading to long term effects. These effects are mainly displayed in their behaviour or development. As an example, children who are happy and relaxed within themselves and their surroundings is going to learn better than a child who is anxious and worried. This can affect their intellectual development which could have a knock-on effect on the other areas of development. A child's emotional state will affect their concentration which in turn will affect their learning. If a child struggling with a transition decides to become aggressive this will affect other children, so its essential support is given straight away. (Beith et al. 2010)

Table of Long-term effects

Physical development	-Lack of sleep and eating can affect growth -may turn to comfort eating which will result in weight gain -may cut down massively on food and make themselves vomit in order to feel in control -may turn to self-harm
Communication and intellectual development	-may become withdrawn and avoid socialising -lack of concentration and/or uninterested in schoolwork
Social, emotional and behavioural development	-making and keeping friends may become difficult -uneasy relationship with parents can form -self-confidence and esteem can plummet -loss of trust in their elders -attention seeking behaviour

The role of the practitioner

As Early years practitioners' people in other occupations automatically assume we have the best patience, to a certain extent this shows the public's view on children. Patience suggests children are challenging and their educators are tranquil. This may be true, but it is the job of the practitioner to challenge the child to help progress their development. There are four essential areas of a practitioner:

- 1- Building relationships with the child and parents
- 2- Planning suitable activities for their needs and environment
- 3- Aiding and expanding play, development and learning of children
- 4- Examining achievements for future steps

Building relationships

Think back to school and the teacher's manners and supportiveness, reflect this through onto practice. Every child wants to be valued and feel welcome. Communication is vital for any relationship especially one with children and their parents. Everybody has needs and children's will have more than their elders therefore it is beneficial to have a good school and home life where there is communication between the practitioner and their parents. As well as the child living this transition the parents are experiencing it to; it is good practice to have a high level of trust and respect with the child's family. Many early years settings will have a system they use in which they will support the child and liaise with the parents, allowing for better communication all around. Parents are a child's first educator before a practitioner, so it is helpful to inform them of their child's education, allowing for extra support at home if needed. There are things only a parent will know about the child which could benefit the practitioner's relationship with them such as their interests and worries. Regular contact with parents is ideal to monitor child progress and come up with a support plan if they are struggling. (Sharkey, 2004)

Planning suitable activities for their needs and environment

the learning environment is key for developmental progress. The setting needs to supply positive resources, experiences and routines in order to benefit the learning of the child. A good activity to help their social skills, language, literacy and maths is a post office role play area. A beneficial routine for children is a system where the children have a

name card or a coat hanger, this allows them to recognize their name as well as basic reading. As a practitioner is good practice to provide the highest quality environment meeting every need of each child. In a high quality environment, the child can have positive activities and experiences catered to their needs as interests, ultimately benefiting their learning and development. Play is vital to learning and growth and as a practitioner it is key to provide many opportunities for them that will link to all five senses. Children's interaction with their environment will shape their self-image and develop their confidence and self-esteem. However, it is vital to not be in control as child lead play will allow practitioners to observe what support the children need. (Sharkey, 2004)

Aiding and expanding play, development and learning of children

There is more to supporting learning than just providing the resources and observing from afar. Children learn to communicate through their interaction with their parents and educator. When communicating with children it is essential to reassure them when they are worried and praise them when they've done a task, this will encourage them as well as pinning you as a trusting, reliable role model. Role play activities are perfect for children's development as practitioners can question them to test their problem-solving skills and role-playing activities can happen indoors and outdoors. The activities practitioners plan needs to spark children's as their responses will help to plan future activities. (Sharkey, 2004)

Examining achievements for future steps

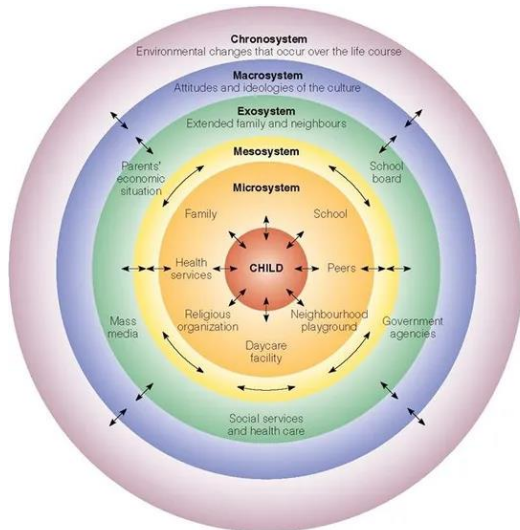
At all stages of education children appreciate praise as it motivates them to push themselves even further. Assessments are key to practitioners as it tracks the progress of the child's development and shows where they need help. Through working in unison with their parents you can fully assess their development and plan suitable activities for them. It is beneficial to monitor their drawings, comments, likes, dislikes and fears as this can help you ease their transition and allows the practitioner to support the child through their experiences. Assessing children is an on-going process and helps the next practitioner to know what needs to be put in place. It is essential to remember not to label children during assessments. (Sharkey, 2004)

Theories in Practice

Maria Montessori- Montessori believed that children should be allowed to learn with real tools such as scissors and sharp knives as well as keeping materials accessible to the children to create beauty and order. She believed that competence and responsibility could be heavily shared with the children. Her work discusses how humans learn best through hands on experiences and urged teachers to not intervene with children's learning. Montessori's method can be seen currently through Montessori nurseries. however, a key activity that follows this method is forest school as children are out in the wild and using tools to gather materials for a fire. (Mooney, 2013)

Lev Vygotsky- Vygotsky has greatly influenced children's play over the ages. He believes that children should be active in their learning but put emphasis on the practitioner developing the child's thinking. A child's potential is more important than their abilities and should be monitored closely. He focused on what children are capable of through their different stages of development he named this the zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development covers the space between children's development and their potential. This potential can only be reached in the right environment. Vygotsky's influence can be seen in modern practice today through child led play to allow them to reach their full potential. A good activity for this is role-play as this allows the practitioner to question the child's decision as the child stays in control. (Tassoni et al. 2007)

Urie Bronfenbrenner- Bronfenbrenner introduced the Ecological systems theory which explains how interactions within different environments influence children. There are 5 different systems within the theory surrounding the child and each one has a different influence on child development. As a practitioner you are apart of the mesosystem which is the second system surrounding the child. The first system is the microsystem which is basically their home and family. Linking these two systems will benefit in preparing the child for the next three. (Guy-Evans, 2020)



To the left is a diagram showing Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System's theory. This is beneficial for practitioners as it shows them what to prepare the children for and how all environments a child encounters are interlinked.

Partnerships

As an early practitioner you will encounter multi-agency working within your setting as there is a range of people that work with children. The two biggest partnerships you will encounter will be with your colleagues and the child's parents as these are the people you will encounter the most. There are many different professionals who will get involved in assessing children. An educational psychologist may get involved with supporting a child when it is recognised they need more support than their peers. If a child is behind in their language development you may encounter a speech and language therapist and as a team you will help the child. Every school now has a SENCO (special educational needs coordinator) who will work closely with children who have additional needs. In extreme cases you may partner up with a social worker to help a child. Multi-agency work has many benefits for the child and their family as it will allow them to feel supported fully allowing them access to specific advice for the child's needs. It also benefits the practitioner as they can exchange information about the child and develop their understanding besides having the extra support. More uncommon partnerships will include the dentist who comes into the setting to assess the children's teeth and the local library who will come in to promote literacy benefiting children's literacy development. (Tassoni et al. 2007)

The needs of the child

Everyone is born with basic needs and it is a practitioner's job to ensure they are met whilst the child attends their setting. These needs are:

- Clean water and food
- Cleanliness
- Suitable clothing and footwear
- Exercise and stimulation
- Rest and sleep
- Air
- Shelter

Clean water and food- practitioners should supply children with potable water and fresh food. This can be met at fruit/snack time as the setting supplies the children with a selection of fresh fruit with a nutritious drink to accompany it.

Cleanliness- it is a legal requirement for a setting to supply basin's for children to wash their hands after using the toilet, before food and after a messy activity.

Suitable clothing and footwear- it is good practice for a setting to provide clothing protection when doing activities such as messy play and sand/water play. When attending forest school, a practitioner should ensure the children have protective shoes and a coat.

Exercise and stimulation- children are very physical during their play with their fine and gross motor skills. However, a physical education class or sports day can be highly beneficial for children.

Rest and sleep- as the day progresses a practitioner will observe children tiring themselves out through their play. A setting should have a quiet zone for children to go to recharge themselves.

Air- oxygen is essential for life so children should have an accessible outdoor learning area with designated outdoor play times.

Shelter- shelter can provide warmth and protection from bad weather so it is essential for a setting to provide a suitable shelter for children.

(Tassoni et al. 2007)

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs

Abraham Maslow proposed humans have a specific set of needs which he sorted into a pyramid of tiers. the pyramid starts with the basic needs of a children with the top tier being idiopathic needs. Originally made for business managers it is now more widely used. As you look at the tiers you will observe how they are all interlinked.

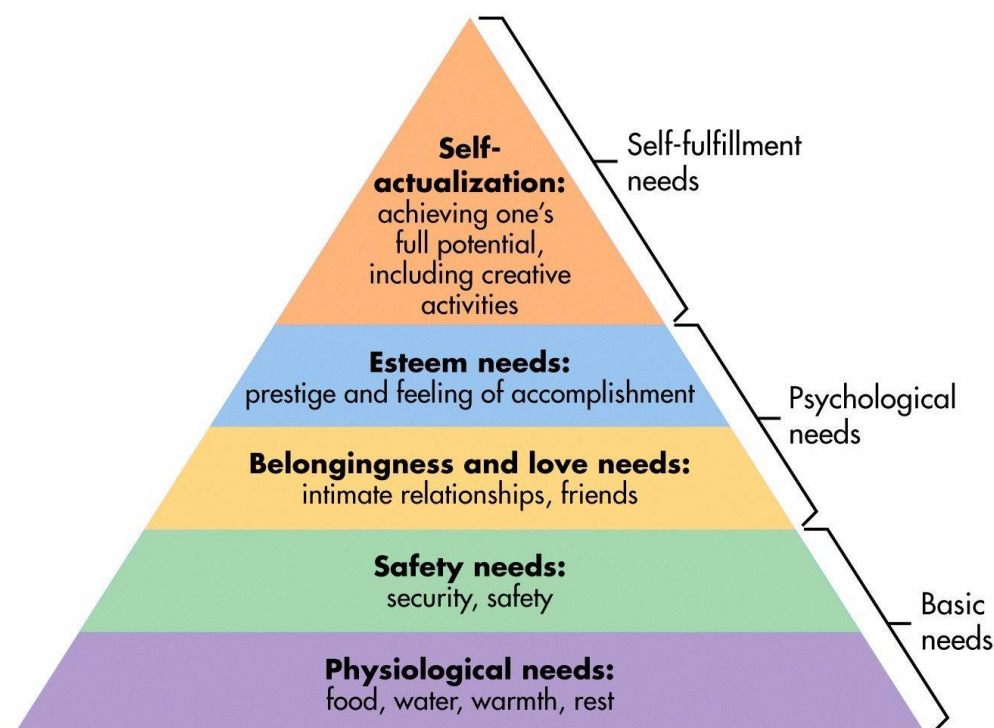
Tier one- This tier is the child's physical needs. A practitioner meets these through the shelter and food and drink they supply.

Tier two- This tier is the En loco parentis one. This where the practitioner provides security and protection for the child when they are away from their parents.

Tier three- This tier is the child's social needs. A practitioner will support this need through introducing them to their peers and planning group activities.

Tier four- This tier focuses on the child's self-discovery. Practitioners can support this tier through planning activities catered to the child's interests and aspirations.

Tier Five- This tier is reinforcing and expanding on the fourth tier. Practitioners should allow children to build upon their personality so the child can see their own potential. (Tassoni et al. 2007)



(source: Simply psychology)

Interventions

What is an intervention? - “An intervention is any action that a school takes with a child, or group of children outside of normal day to day lessons with the aim of improving student progress, attainment and/or well-being. Interventions are an essential part of the day to day running of all schools, regardless of their size, status or the age group of the students.” Arbor Education

How an intervention works:

- Show an impact that is closely and frequently monitored
- Provide a large level of student success
- Specify specific outcomes
- Have a objective group of students
- Measurable outcomes

Examples of interventions:

- Routine, planned literacy and numeracy groups
- Outside support groups such as mental health support group
- Area specific interventions such as a science boost
- One to ones with a teaching assistant
- SENCO support
- Monitoring attendance
- Student behaviour support plan
- Report card

(Arbor Education, no date)

Outcomes

- Practitioner will now know about transitions more in-depth
- The support needed throughout the child's transition
- Ways to support them through the transition
- Expectations of the practitioner
- How to meet the needs of the child.
- How theories link to modern practice
- How working in unison with another organisation can benefit everyone
- What an intervention is and examples of different ones

Reference List

- Beith k et al. 2010 Children & Young People's Workforce. Heinemann. Essex
- Guy-Evans O. 2020. 'Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory' Simply Psychology.
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner.html> accessed: 26/11/2020
- Jennifer Stevens. 2017. Baby to Adult. The Bite.
<https://thebite.aisb.ro/from-a-child-to-an-adult-aisb-french-teacher-quentin-young-talks-about-life/> Accessed: 25/11/2020
- Mooney C. 2013. Theories of childhood. Second edition. Redleaf Press. St. Paul.
- No Author. No date. What are interventions? Arbor Education. Accessed: 27/11/2020
- Saul McLeod. 2020. Maslows hierarchy of needs. Simply Psychology.
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html> Accessed: 26/11/2020
- Tassoni P et al. 2007. Child care and education. Fourth edition. Heinemann. Essex.
- Walker E. (2019) 'Managing transitions in early years provisions' Croner-i. <https://app.croneri.co.uk/feature-articles/managing-transitions-early-years-provisions#:~:text=Children%20may%20also%20have%20to,death%20of%20a%20family%20member>. Accessed: 25/11/2020
- Wyse D. 2004. Childhood studies An Introduction. Blackwell Publishing. Oxford. Chapter twenty, The role of the early years practitioner. Sharkey A.