

(Yes builds coaching and consulting, 2018)



PRACTITIONER'S HANDBOOK

AN HOLISTIC APPROACH TO TRANSITIONS AND
SUPPORTING EVERY CHILD'S JOURNEY

**This handbook is based on the transition from home to a
nursery setting.**

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INTRODUCTION

Aims

The aim of this handbook is to provide practitioners with a guide that can support children through the transition from home to nursery more effectively whilst adapting a holistic approach within practice. This guide will look at the term transition, role of the adult, the importance of effective communication whilst covering the needs of the child and ensuring those better experiences and outcomes are met. Also, considering the learning environment and the importance of a play-based pedagogy. Furthermore, the importance of partnership working, applying interventions, whilst considering learning and developmental theories to support a soothing transition into early years.

What is a transition?



Transition in the simplest form consists of a change or the process of which the change happens (Cambridge dictionary, 2021). Children experience transitions from the moment they are born, it is a process that happens in everyday life in all societies around the world.

The transition in child development are emotional, biological, and psychological changes that begin from birth to childhood, to middle childhood then adolescence. Education provides children and young people to experience many different transitions, but it is the first experiences within early years that sets the foundation for future resilience towards the many years children face in education (Lindon, 2012).

Children and young people make the transition from home to attending an early year setting, then to a primary school, through many stages it is then the journey to secondary school. Once this process is achieved opportunities include further education and the world is theirs to explore (Meggett, Bruce and Manning-Morton, 2016).

Patel believes that change can be a daunting prospect, but change is inevitable and before children reach early years, they would have undergone many environmental and emotional experiences, practitioners that embrace the opportunity to support children through a transition can support and create solid foundations for young learners and help build better coping mechanisms becoming resilient towards future change (Patel, 2021).

Furthermore, some children can find transitions particularly challenging, support from parents and their key person helps smoothen the process. It takes a level of commitment from the practitioner to apply effective communication, forming positive links with other professionals and families from the start, adapting a shared approach is important to promote continuity for all children transitioning into the early years (Welsh Government, 2015).

Building positive relationships with parents can help the practitioner to be familiarised with any recent changes or upcoming events that might affect the child. Brooker says that children can find certain events difficult to process, from the birth of a new sibling or a death of a parent, which can cause emotional and behavioural changes which in time can impact the learning and development of the child (Brooker, 2008).

Furthermore, having a good knowledge of child development and using observation within practice can identify any changes in the child or highlight concerns. The practitioner can also use their tacit knowledge, when combined provides opportunity to assess any child or family who may need support, from the first introduction of a home visit or a setting in session through obtaining as much information on the child, environment and having the links with other professionals in place can prevent difficulties escalating (Social Care Wales, 2019).

Role of the adult



(Wealthy Gorilla, 2014)

Nursery provides enriching experiences that support the learning, development of babies, toddlers, and young children. Practitioners use effective communication whilst working in partnership with children, families, and other professionals during the transition to provide a smoother experience that supports the learning and development of children (Patel, 2021)

According to Tassoni, the child and caregiver can find the process exciting but can cause anxiety due to the unfamiliar adult and environment. Tassoni suggests, practitioners need to support parents and reassure them that the child will be safe and comfortable when left. It is managing the process of separation sensitively and effectively whilst aiming for those positive experiences (Pacey, 2019).

Expectations can be formed over the time leading up to the transition, getting to know the child and family provides reassurance. Through careful planning whilst involving the child and parent's better experiences and outcomes can be achieved, these principles are highlighted and embedded within the Early year's framework stage (EYFS) with the aim on closing the attainment gap (Department of Education, 2021).

Key person

The key person becomes a familiar figure, who from the first home visit or settling in session makes the child and family feel welcome. For practitioners to develop a shared understanding parents who disclose any concerns of their child's development and shares information such as any upcoming changes, can prepare the key worker to plan whilst including the holistic needs of the child (Trodd, 2013).

It is a significant role that requires the practitioner to provide a safe, caring environment whilst meeting the emotional needs of children. Whilst always being available to reassure the child then responding sensitively to their feelings and behaviours practitioners are building strong foundations from the start to facilitate children to become resilient, independent, and become valued learners (Birth to 5 Matters, 2021).

According to Bandura, practitioners have influence on children within their care, children imitate the behaviour of adults, by observing the actions of others, then mentally retaining the action which can be reinitiated by the observing child (Bandura, 1977).

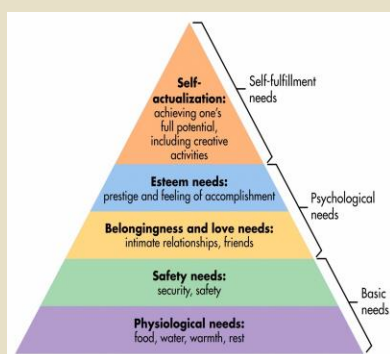
Practitioners can be a positive role model by implementing articles 2, 3, 12, 13 and 14 of the UNCRC. Within their practice by displaying non-discrimination behaviour, promoting good manners, praising achievements, having patience, and taking the time to listen to the views of all children (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2016).

Needs of the Child

Practitioners apply a child centred approach to ensure the holistic needs and rights of the child are being met. Practitioners can support children in being resilient and independent by providing a warm and secure attachment and providing a sense of belonging (Reggio Children, 2020). The rights of the child should be at the centre of the setting and within practice this ensures all children are receiving the highest quality in care and learning (Welsh Government, 2015).

Reggio Emilia approach highlights the importance of including children in their learning and development. From interactions with others and environment children make connections from the things around them, different concepts, and experiences (Abbott and Nutbrown, 2001).

Malaguzzi suggests through listening, observing and participating in the learning of children practitioners can find opportunities to explore the child's interests to gain a knowledge of their strengths, needs and personality to facilitate in reaching their full potential (Rinaldi, 2006).



(Ferris, 2015)



Maslow's theory 'Hierarchy of needs' is made up of different levels which is divided into two phases, the lower level consists of physical and psychological; needs. Maslow suggest, children need to have their basic needs such as nutrition, comfort, sleep, and exercise met before learning is initiated (Maslow, 1993).

The following levels consists of the need for a secure, safe environment routines, and loving relationships with the final level of reaching full potential. Maslow states a child who is hungry or feeling stressed cannot learn. A child's environment that does not contain love or safety will affect the learning and development of the child (Maslow, 1987).

Children's development creates millions of neural connections in the brain to happen. Chemicals within the brain can become unbalanced with any emotional, physical threat which causes learning to cease. The brain goes into survival mode when under stress or senses threat, this can cause the brain to function differently and the ability to think, remember, reason or to think analytically is reduced significantly. Therefore, it is important for practitioners to make positive relationships with the child and parents early on to understand the needs of the child and family (Haarsten, Johnson and Jones, 2016).

Play

Friedrich Froebel belief is based on the principles that all children between 0-7 Years need a stimulating environment that encourages children to explore and learn skills through their own perspectives through play. Froebel considered a holistic approach to the child's health, environment, physical, spiritual, and social development. The environment that provides resources such as chalk, scissors, stones, paper, sticks, and clay provide open-ended experiences which then combined with child imitated activity's that supports the learning and development of children (Tovey, 2017).

The curriculum of Wales highlights the importance of play, children gain first-hand experiences through experimenting, risk taking, problem solving and then using their own initiative to make decisions. Play provides the opportunity for children to find a sense of belonging to understand themselves and the world around them, their self-image and feeling of self-worth (Welsh Government, 2015).

According to Winnicott, he suggested the environment which play is initiated in, originates from a secure attachment between the child/caregiver or child and key worker. He also described play as the freedom were the child and adult can be their true self, providing many opportunities for children to apply imagination. Children can express themselves through play and it becomes a way they can process their feelings (Lumsden, 2015).

Environment

The environment should be warm, welcoming, safe and reflects a fully inclusive setting which provides many opportunities for children to explore through enriching experiences to support in their learning and development. Resources should reflect unfamiliar cultures, religion, this can be achieved by including books, multi-cultural dolls and displays (Hodgman, 2015).

Inviting families to visit the setting can support in reassuring the parents who may find the process difficult. Providing the opportunity for the caregiver to view the personalised resources such as a name tag ready for the child's coat hook can reflect a nurturing environment this can support strengthen new bonds. Displaying children's work can promote a sense of achievement combined gives children a sense of belonging (Brodie, 2021).

It is the environment that plays a key role in supporting and extending learning and development of children. Enabling environments support babies and young children to participate in play as they feel relaxed and comfortable (Vaggers and Wilmot, 2010).

Within a secure environment children will want to explore the surroundings around them by touching, manipulating, and manoeuvring the items they find. The EYFS states the emotional, outdoor, and indoor environment for play needs to support the learning and development of all children (Department of Education, 2021).

Enabling environments provides children to feel safe, it helps children build new friendships which provide a sense of worth and security. Every child is unique and in the right environment learning can support children to become confident, resilient, and capable learners. Practitioners treat all children uniquely with the understanding all children learn in their own time (EYFS, 2012).



According to Piaget, the social environment is important to cognitive development children learn through interactions, young children start with basic building blocks known as schemas these are created and developed within social, physical environments. Play provides children to develop a methodical, systematic, and logical base of information through applying their senses and movements in interactions with the key worker, materials, or objects within the nursery setting (Piaget, 1957).

Maria Montessori theory is based on developing experiences that children can learn through their senses first rather than intellect. Montessori suggest that through independent learning children form self – realisation, the teacher acts as a facilitator who provides a stimulating environment which children receive meaningful learning experiences (Standing, 1984).



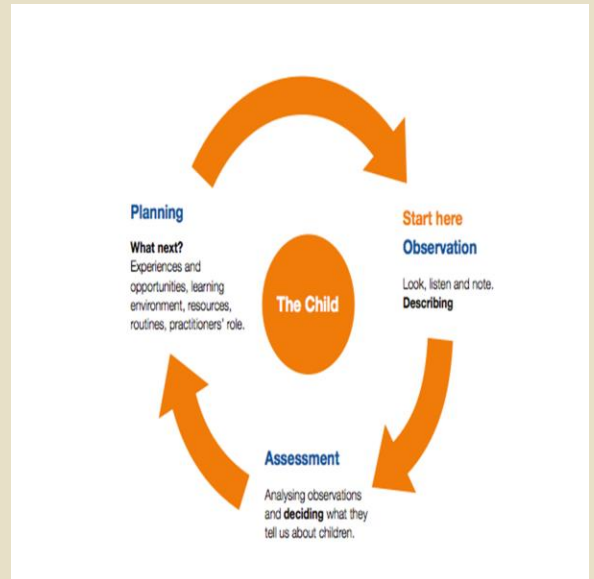
Many pioneers and philosophers have influenced the early years foundation such as Tē Whariki who belief is all children grow up competent and confident learners, that are healthy in mind, body, and spirit with an acknowledgement they are a valued within society (May and Carr, 1993.)

Observation, assessing and planning

As the illustration shows, Planning should be based on the individual needs of each child it reflects the abilities and interests of the child. This is provided from observing the child then assessing the information on the child development. Finally, the practitioner can consider the next stage for the child's learning whilst being mindful that any learning objectives might not be followed, the child may explore and discover other ways to gain the skill (Haarsten, Johnson and Jones, 2016).

Individual Learning books are an effective method in recording children development, floor books are child-centred which encourages shared thinking through communication, language, personal, social, emotional, and physical development. Parents and care givers can be invited to view the learning and development of their child, working together to reach the best possible outcomes (Warden, 2018)

Where English is not the first language of the child's parent, practitioners can use a translator app, or the setting could employ a bilingual speaker to support the transition. Key workers and staff can include phrases from the child's home language such as hello, goodbye, to provide security and build a secure relationship (Development for Education, 2021).



Partnership Working and Setting

A settling in policy should be in place, this will contain the procedures which will support all children and their families through the transition from home to attending nursery, the policy should contain arrangements for more complex scenarios such as strategies and sharing concerns surrounding SEND (McVay, 2021).

Providing opportunities that children can view positive relationships through partnership working with parents such as holding meetings where other key workers and parents are in the setting or inviting families to events such as open days, concerts can establish close relationships between home, provider, and community (Welsh Government, 2015).

This process is important it helps develop positive, trusting relationships and provides the opportunity to apply effective communication to support the individual needs of the children (Parent Partnership in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021)

The EYFS policy states, it takes a combined effort from the parents to participate in good parenting and from the provision to provide high – quality early years learning. Together supports foundation children the opportunity to reach their full potential. Practitioners can support this by taking the time to understand, inspire and challenge children's potential for learning. The key person is vital to achieving shared and sustained thinking through interactions and open questioning in practice can provide better outcomes and close the gap on attainment (Department of Education, 2021).

Interventions and outcomes

Interventions

Families first is focused on achieving better outcomes for children, young people, and families. Its aim is to support by applying early intervention to families who may be living in poverty or experiencing hardship, Practitioners can refer families to prevent poor education outcomes and prevent the child's wellbeing to be negatively affected (Welsh Government, 2019)

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 core aim is to tackle poverty in Wales through essential interventions such as Flying start, it provides children a better start in life, through supporting children and families who live in deprived areas the programme provides the skills to parents to support their child's development. Parents are provided opportunities to join training to improve the ability to gain employment with the free part time quality childcare available this only enables parents to participate in training opportunities which will support the whole family moving forwards (Welsh Government, 2015).

Outcomes

The desired outcome for all children after transition into nursery are happy, secure, healthy, resilient, learners who have made positive friendships with peers and are not so dependent on their key worker. Children seem comfortable in the environment and their families are well informed, practitioners involve the care giver in their child's learning this can be observed during end of day during handovers (Gopnik, 2016).

The principles at the core of the new curriculum of (Wales) 2022 aim for effective outcomes which include all children to have access to an enabling adult, experiences, and environment, that supports communication, physical development, well-being, and exploration.

When all combined it provides children with a sense of belonging Practitioners provide experiences through play whether indoors or outdoors the experiences are authentic and purposeful, together supports the learning and development of children whilst demonstrating the highest quality of care and learning has been delivered (Welsh Government, n.d.).

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