

A Early Years Practitioners Handbook Guide To Transitioning



(source:Pinterest, no date)



Contents

Introduction and Rationale

Pg 3

Needs of the child

Pg 5

Role of the adult

Pg 9

Partnerships

Pg 11

Interventions

Pg 13

Reference list

Pg 15

Introduction and Rationale

Aim: The aim of this handbook is to understand and give a guide to practitioners in the early years setting of the importance of effective communication for young children's learning and development during transition.

What is transition?

Transitions are moves that children and young people make, from home to nursery setting, from nursery to primary school setting all the way up to going for a job. Transition is a move or change in the children's life, this is part of everyone's life. According to Vogler et al, (2009) research suggests that there are more than one type of transition, firstly there is horizontal: this refers to changes that are less formal in a child's life for example parents might not have a routine for their children so they may not be asked to go to bed at a certain time or they may eat where they choose instead where the parents want them to. Finally vertical transition which is considered a more major change in the child's routine for example going to school for the first time. Dunlop and Fabian (2007) suggest that during the transition to a new setting children leave the "comfort zone" they face the unknown, a new culture, somewhere new, new people, different roles within the setting, the rules of the setting and the identity of the pupil and the setting. It is important to make sure that communication is very clear and easy to understand, for example making sure all pupils understand the rules of each task. If the pupils do not this can lead to prevention of accessing the learning opportunities. There are a number of children who enjoy and look forward to transition. However transition can be very challenging for many children and support from staff and parents can help the transition go a little smoother. According to Parentzone (2021) and mentally healthy schools (unknown) suggest that transition and change is a normal part of life and can help provide the opportunities for children and young to help develop their resilience. If a child has a negative time with transition it can have an impact on the academic achievements and wellbeing of the child. During transition it is important for children to have the ability to talk about their concerns and to make sure they are supported are able to cope with any changes. According to Novak Djokovic foundation (2021) every transition for individuals are different and unique, to help with this process parents can be proactive, help their children by using strategies thinking of what has worked in the past with other children, or what they have learned by

speaking to others, however they also need to think of the child's behaviours and feelings as these may change due to the change in situation, there are some children who do not like to know what is going on or want to plan what is going to happen as this is unfamiliar and this can lead to more stress than would have happened if they did not the finer details to what is happening. However, children tend to prefer to have the details of what is going to happen. This normally helps the children feel comfortable. On the other hand, choosing the approach where the children know the details of what is going to happen can be challenging as parents tend to prefer the option where the children do not, with all these points it is believed allowing the children to have a part in the planning is a good idea because this helps the children navigate through the process and help to understand that it is ok to have changes in life. Why is transition important? Transition is important because transition happens in everyone's life at different stages; however, being able to manage transitions and understand the change will help with wellbeing and how well the children can learn and adapt to different situations.

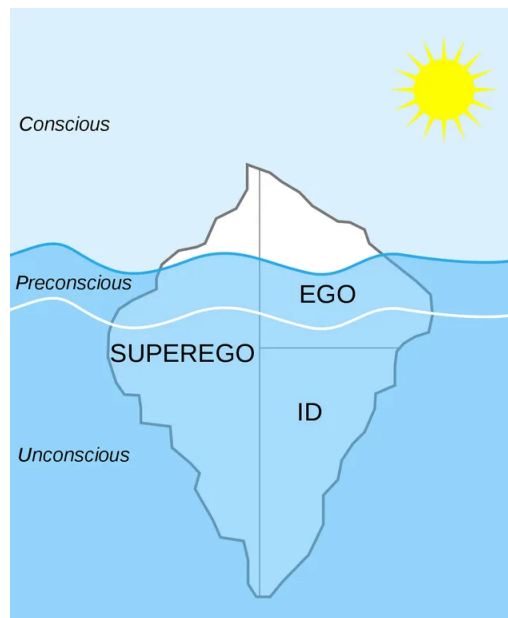
Needs of the child

All children are unique no matter what they're culture, background, ethnicity, religion or beliefs, disability or needs, home language, ability or gender are. Not one child should feel excluded or left out in a way. They should feel safe and comfortable with the environment and the practitioners, staff that come into contact. According to equality act (2010), equality is to ensure that every individual has the equal rights and opportunities to make the most of life and talents. Dowling (2014) suggests that to enable practitioners to give the most support to each child's individual needs, one of the most important things to do is for a practitioner to learn and understand the child's needs, what the child likes, dislikes, interests and how they think and learn. By observing the child the practitioner can start to understand and learn what about the children's individual needs. Accord to Pacey (2016) when observing the children information is gathered, this information is used to help plan and assess where the pupils are in learning and development process, observation should not only be a paper exercise however, observation is there for everyone including pupils to ensure they have a mapped out journey of the time in the setting. On the other hand how the observation is presented is personal to the setting, the carers and the children, but it should always show the progression of the children.

When thinking of the needs of the child it is important to look at theories of child development, some of these have helped map out modern practices over the years:

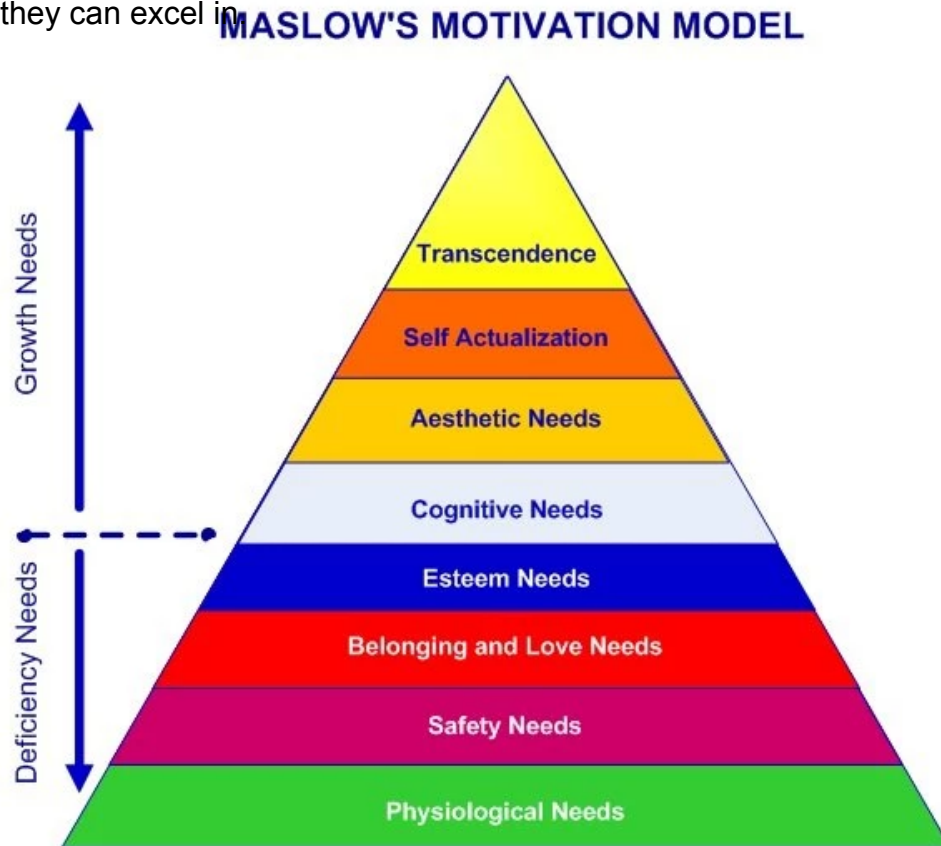
Sigmund freud: Focuses on the unconscious mind Sigmund uses an iceberg to describe the three levels of the mind. Id, is the very first part of the iceberg sigmund suggest that this is survival mood where children learn to survive with no control, secondly is the ego, this is where children learn they develop the skills of survival and start to control what they need when they need it for example when a child needs food they may cry and scream to get what they need to survive and finally is super ego this is where children learn about having a moral compass and start to learn and understand feelings and when they have done something wrong, children also learn to act accordingly.

(source simplypsychology,
2018)



Another theory is Maslow (1942, 1954) suggests that all people are motivated by achieving goals and this is the same for children and young people, Maslow talks about a pyramid where to be able to move onto you have to fulfill the first section of the pyramid. The pyramid consists of 5 tiers, firstly physiological needs: this is the basics of a human survival such as food, water, clothes, warmth and sleep. these are considered the most the important because without these the child will not be able to survive, all other needs are put on pause until the physiological needs are met. Secondly safety needs: security and safety become the next most important thing for children when the physiology needs are met, children need to feel control within their lives and these can be fulfilled by the family and environment. Thirdly is love and belongingness needs; after the two bottom on the pyramid has been fulfilled next is a feeling of belongingness, this refers to the emotional needs of the child such as relationships, connectedness and being part of a group. When thinking of this tier it is important to think of friendships, trust, intimacy and acceptance. Fourthly is esteem needs: when thinking of this tier practitioners tend to think of self worth, being happy in the child's own skin, the feeling that the child is respected and valued as a person. It is important to think of esteem as two different categories: first is esteem for one-self and second is the desire for reputation. Many children believe that this is the most important of the two because by having a status children believe they are higher up the ladder. And finally self

actualization needs: this is the highest level in the Maslow pyramid as this is thought to be where children have to desire to accomplish the best that they can do and be the best one can be without the need of what others might think or feel. This is where children start to have a desire for more specific interests, for example wanting to grow up and have a certain job or to specify in a sport which they can excel in



(Source Simplypsychology (2020))

Why as Practitioners should attachment theory be important?

To help have a smooth transition it is important to build positive attachments with practitioners because this allows the pupils to feel safe and able to explore and try new things while still building attachments to staff and peers. According to Pacey (2016) having a smooth transition needs to involve attachments, these attachments need to be secure; this will allow them to be developed further, and new ones to be built between practitioners, staff and other peers within the setting. It is important to remember that some pupils would have already formed attachments

with practitioners in other settings therefore practitioners must be aware of those struggling with the move.

To aid both emotional and social development it is important to build attachments not just with family and carers, but other adults that have a importance within the child life for example, practitioners and staff within the school environments as pupils will feel comfortable and safe within the environment this enables them to try new things they may be unfamiliar with as they know whatever the task is they are safe and the danger risk is minimum. According to (Bowlby 1997), children develop an 'international working model' this puts the pieces together to how pupils view relationships and how they socially interact with others if pupils do not form good attachments it can affect the sense of trust within other environments how they see themselves and have confidence with interacting with others.

Communication

Why is communication important? Communication is very important to aiding the relationships with any pupil, it is also crucial to develop a good professional relationship with parents and carers as well because if there is good communication with the parent the pupil will see that and see that the teachers are safe and it is ok to have a relationship with more than just their parents or carer. It may take more time to build a relationship with a child. Communicating with children can sometimes be challenging because the pupil might not have developed the communication skills for a number of reasons whether it is struggling to speak or understand what is being said. If the English language is not the pupils first language. Pupils might also struggle to communicate if they are non-verbal or anxious and scared. Being able to recognise signs of a pupil being scared or anxious is something that practitioners train in everyday, the more the practitioner understands the pupil the easier it will be to recognise these signs as each sign can be individual to each child.

While communication is very important, it is also important for the practitioner to observe what is happening within the setting in order to help plan future activities maybe there is an activity that only some pupils enjoyed, however not all enjoyed then maybe another activity focusing on the same motor skill is needed.

The Role of the adult

From when a child is very young the child starts to form strong bonds with adults; these are normally with their primary caregiver, normally close family members; this is called attachment and the first step to creating a positive relationship. According to (Winnicott, 1964) when describing a baby you will not just describe the baby however you will also be describing someone as there is no such thing as a baby. This goes along with the need of building strong relationships.

When children transition from home to nursery they will need to start creating a bond with new people, this is important to remember that when talking about transition it is important to remember that it is not just the practitioner that the child needs to build a relationship upon but also their peers. When thinking of the role of the adult it is important to remember it is not just the key workers that pupils will have to start building relationships with.

When supporting transitions within early years it is important to think of the skills and knowledge that is needed to be able to have a smooth transition.

Communication:

To enable a trusting relationship between practitioners, staff, children and parents, effective communication is vital.

To develop a positive relationship with trust practitioners need to Observe by spending time watching the pupils the practitioners then learns what their likes and dislikes, what interests them and there will be an attachment bond forming as the practitioner asks questions of what the pupil has done of the weekend ect. Think about who the practitioner is talking to. To be an effective practitioner, practitioners need to be aware of the culture, background, ability and any circumstances of the pupil and the family. According to the Welsh Government (2016), inclusion is a process in which all pupils from all backgrounds get access to the same opportunities in ways which are relevant to their needs. Giving the pupils time and confidence to be able to share how they are feeling? Also having the confidence to ask questions no matter how big or small and the ability to be able to explore and find the answer together. Finally, making sure that the information that is given to the parents are clear and the process of transition is set out for all to see in plenty of time, this can be done through newsletters, dojo's, drop in sessions, and planned visits, twitter and even posters there is no reason for parents not to be able to have the

information.

Transition can be a difficult time for many children and their parents/carers and the practitioner needs to be able to support and reassure the parents and children.

A Role Model

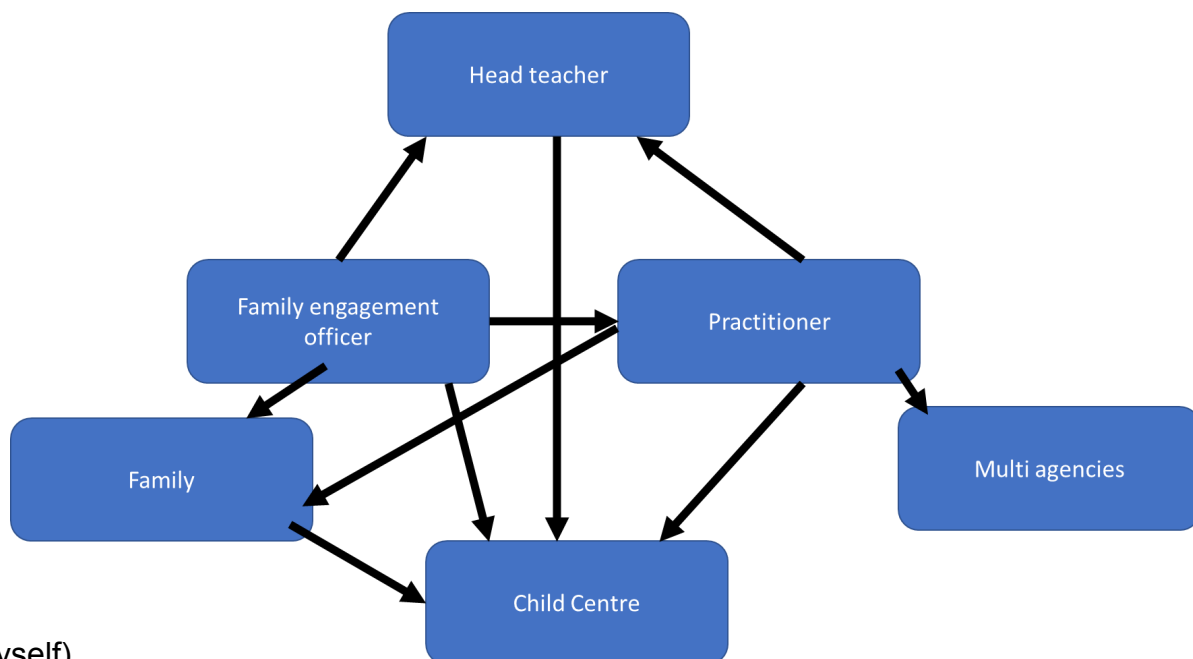
Bandura (1997) theory on social learning theory, shows the importance of observing, modeling and imitating how pupils learn from these with regards to behaviours, attitudes and emotional reactions to situations. This shows how important it is for all staff members working within the school environment to be professional. The child's ability to be able to cope with change whether it is the short term or the long term, O'Connor, (2006) states the first experience of transition is what will impact on a child's transiting in the future, children are more likely to accept and have a smooth transition if it is done gradually. It is important to think of how the children may view or act on the practitioner's behaviour, body language and verbal communication. A pupil that feels safe, confident and happy in the presence of the practitioner will go home happy and positive from the experience, however pupils who feel rushed or made to feel that they are not as fast as others are more likely to go home and feel sad or have negative feelings about their experience of transition.

While transition is done as a group or class it is important to remember that transition is inclusive for everyone and some may need some more reassuring than others, some families may need something different to others to enable the ability of a smooth transition, to enable this process the practitioner can work closely with the families and outside agencies that may be involved or are relevant, take extra care to make sure that there is extra support for those who need and that the planning is adapted for those pupils as well.

Partnerships

Working with partnerships with others is a vital part of the practitioner's role and is a fundamental part of committing and helping a child's development. Making sure that a plan for transition is put into place and that everyone is happy and know what is happening all comes with working in partnership with others to enable the parent to have a clear and set plan of what is happening important dates, this also allows the child to be prepared for the events as the parents can communicate exactly what is going to happen for the transition whether it will be a face to face or coming into the setting everyone involved will have a clear plan of what the day may bring. Strong links between all parties involved helps for a smooth happy transition.

This diagram below show hows important a child centred approach is according to WJEC 2019, childs center approach is important because it concentrates on the child as a individual, looks at situations from the child's perspective, allows the pupil to learn through experiences and by doing not just sat listening, by listening to the pupil it will help the pupil to feel valued and belonging in the activity to help plan, it allows the child to problem solve an develop confidently and independently. The diagram below also points out the importance of the practitioner in how to liaise with and communicate with all involved in the transition process.



(source Myself)

Partnerships is an ongoing process where formal and informal observations and evaluations of the child in the setting, any additional support involving outside agencies can be worked on together before it is too late.

Interventions

Within the setting there has been a big change in how the home to nursery has developed to start with the class teacher goes and visits the 4 feeder play groups in a setting where the pupils are happy and settled, this allows the teacher to speak to the staff and start to gather some information, the teacher watches as the children interact with each other starting to learn what their like and dislikes are. Once the list has come out with contact details and names of the children that will be attending class in September this normally happens by February the class teacher then sets up a class dojo for the parents to start communicating with the class teacher and the FAO (Family arrangement officer) this is where the head teacher sends a video welcoming the pupils and the parents to the school, the pupils were sent a welcome pack within the welcome pack the class are giving a coloured caterpillar badge and instruction with all important information with regard to what is going to happen during the transition process. The class are split into two groups red caterpillars and yellow caterpillars the first session involves the outdoor and a trip to the forest with parents, teachers, FAO and support staff who will be in the class come September this is a informal why for the children to get to know one another, parents to start talking to each other and staff, the Head teacher comes down to welcome them all into the school. The pupils go on a caterpillar hunt with caterpillars hidden in the forest. The pupils need to go find the colour of the caterpillar to match their badge. Second visit is all about learning where they are, how to get to the classroom in the morning again following the caterpillar to the door, where the toilets are? Where to hand their bag and coats all simple things that will help enable a smooth transition. And finally the third day of transition they follow the caterpillars from the front door to the class and then there was a fine motor activities set up around the class to enable the pupils to see what the class setup is like, this also gives a chance for parents to ask any questions or share any concerns they may have. Finally and the first day of school the parents drop their children off following the caterpillars and after they have dropped off the child there is a room where there is coffee, tea and biscuits available for them to come along if the parents want to and again talk about any problem or just have a chat with other parents in the same position as themselves.



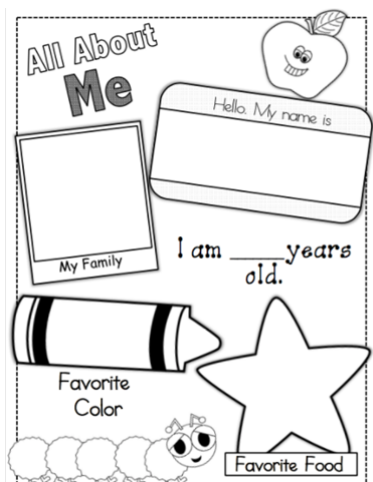
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(Source shutterstock, 2021) (Source Twinkl,)

(Source, 123Rf, 2021)

Another brilliant tool that is used for children is an all about me sheet that has the basic information such as age, likes, dislikes. The all about me poster can be done by drawing picture writing or by telling the teacher and the teacher writes it is completely up to the individual how they want the poster to look. The poster will then be put onto the wall for the pupils to see their work.



(source made by teachers, no date)

(Source St Anthony's Primary, 2017)



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