



(Source: Emilan Geczi 2019)

Transitioning from home to a Flying Start setting

A guide for key workers

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Introduction

This handbook has been constructed to provide valuable information for keyworkers and outline the importance of effective communication.

The aim is to highlight the importance of a positive transition from home to the setting for both the children and their families, as well as the effect it can have on the child's development.

“Children will face many transitional changes, this crucial time in a child's life can have an impact on their wellbeing as well as their future outcomes “(Vogler et al, 2008)

Transitions

Transitions are key events or a process of change in a child's life. Prior 1990s, research focused on a single event such as the first day at nursery. Transitions research developed after it was identified a child should have the right to know what is happening to them. According to Trodd (2012), this was evident in World War two where children were told they were being sent on holiday when in fact they were being evacuated. This would have been traumatic to have no warning or information of where they were going, who with, and how long for. Another example can be seen when a new sibling was due to arrive, families would send the children to stay with other members of the family, making them feel excluded and not part of the process of having a new family member.

Transition should be seen as a process and not an event. This process should involve parents, child, and the setting (EYFS 2008)

The importance of transition

Through research, the importance of including children was officially recognised after evidence suggested that not being involved had detrimental effects to their relationships with others, their wellbeing, and future outcomes. As a result of this, this is now part of the United Nations convention on the rights of the child (1989). Article 12 states that every child has the right to voice on what matters and issues that may affect them, as children's views are considered in the best interest of the child.

According to Dowling (1995), transitions can affect learning and behaviour for life. Children will cope better when informed and included. A positive transition will give a child a sense of identity, belonging, social and emotional well-being, and resilience. All of these are key factors to achieve positive outcomes for children.

There are two types of transitions: vertical and horizontal. According to Open Learn Create (2017), horizontal transitions occur in the nursery setting as a change of routine. From playing freely around the activities, to being asked to sit for a snack, it is important for a key worker to understand that not all children are used to a designated snack time where they are expected to sit at a table to eat. Some children may find this distressing and need an adult to sit with them or may need to gradually build up to sit for the whole time that is expected of others. Some children with understanding or language issues may need prompting when a routine is likely to change soon so they are aware of what is coming next and not startled when it is suddenly time to end play.

In contrast, vertical transitions are linked to unique events that do not happen on a regular basis such as starting a new setting or school. This needs to be considered during the settling in process, when a child is introduced to the unfamiliar environment. They are unsure of what is expected, and as a key worker it is important to understand the child and family background and support them where possible.

Early Years Matters (2021) suggests that children's lives are busy. Attending a setting for the first time is a milestone event for a child and has a definite effect on their development. They can be both exciting and times of uncertainty, new surroundings, expectations, routines, with unfamiliar adults looking out for them. Transition is described as an ongoing journey rather than

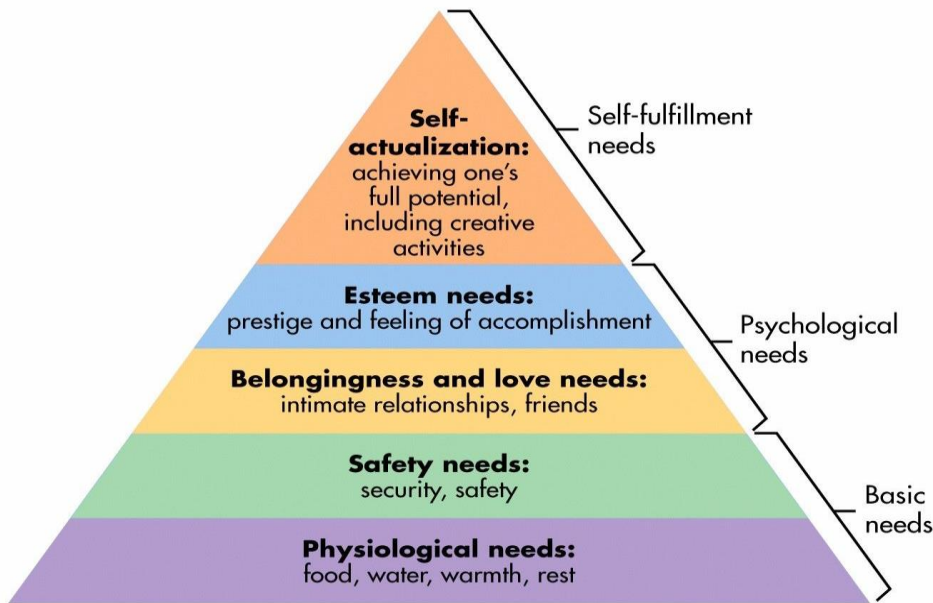
a destination. It is important to remember that happy settled children learn better. As a key worker, an equally important aspect is working with the parents and appreciating that transition affects families also. Separation anxiety affects both parents and children, with positive communication to parents this will allow for appropriate preparation for them and the child. If a parent is anxious or unsure this will influence the child. Anjali Patel (2021) states that stability is vital in a child's early years, and they will experience several emotional and environmental transitions. Strong respectful relationships between parents and keyworkers enables a positive transition.

The needs of the child

Evidence shows that the early years are vital for the development of a child's brain. The effects of communication and relationships with others have a significant impact on a child's learning, development and outcomes. According to Macdonald, N. Gealy, and Tinney, G. (2019), brain development is rapid during these times and can be impacted by first experiences such as starting a new setting and being away from their parent for the first time.

It is important as a keyworker to understand that relationships and interactions with a child effect the part of the brain which is responsible for social and emotional behaviour. Quality adult interactions, environmental factors, and experiences will all influence the brain which can bloom or prune. The National Society for the prevention of cruelty to children (2021) says that a child's brain develops before birth, but there are times during early childhood where brains are more affected by a positive or negative experience. All children develop at various times, but all deserve a positive experience.

According to Bates (2019), Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that it is vital for children to feel secure and have positive relationships. The triangle is divided up into various stages and Maslow believed the lower stages must be met before a child can move up and progress up the triangle. A child needs food, to feel safe, secure and feel belonging. These are all important qualities for a setting to consider. These needs must be met daily, so the child can learn and thrive. As a key worker we ensure the child is offered snack through the healthy eating snack menu, we provide a safe and secure environment, and the key worker system allows for a child to build a secure attachment with a secondary care giver.



(Source: Simply Psychology 2013)

Part of the Flying Start programme includes having an enhanced health visitor service. Before a child and family is allocated a space, the manager of the setting will have a liaison meeting with the health visitor. Here, information is shared regarding any concerns, issues or support the family may need. The Schedule of Growing Skills (SoGS) are discussed. This assessment is completed by the health visitor at two years of age and highlights any locomotive, manipulative visual hearing or speech and language issues. If a child has an identified ALN then there are other professionals who will visit the setting. These may include transitions team, inclusion team, physio, occupational health depending on the child's individual need. A health care plan is put in place before a child is allowed to attend.

A child and their family are invited into the setting for an induction meeting, where they can ask any questions they have, as well as meeting staff and the designated key worker. All about me is completed by the parent to find out information, which is vital to getting to know the child, who they live with, who is important to them, likes dislikes and what may upset them or need support with. Here any key words can be listed if a child's second language is English, and a parent may want to add a few words which are helpful should a child wish to ask for something in their home language for example when requesting a drink or the toilet. The form also asks for parents

to list who the child lives with. This can be a great insight into family life and talking to the child about family and others can make them feel respected, have a sense of identity and belonging.

The form is titled 'Dyma Fi yn/ This is Me at' and is numbered '2'. It is a bilingual form with Welsh and English text. The sections include:

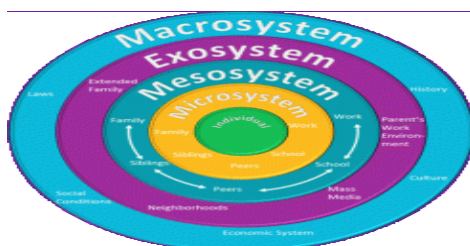
- Medical Information:** A large box for 'Alergdd a gwybodaeth meddygol/ Allergies and Medical Information'.
- Family Details:**
 - Enw/ Name:** A box for the child's name.
 - Enw'r teulu/ Family Name:** A box for the family name.
 - Enw'r plant/ Child's Name:** A box for the child's name.
 - Enw'r fam/ Mother's Name:** A box for the mother's name.
 - Enw'r dad/ Father's Name:** A box for the father's name.
 - Enw'r gŵyn/ Grandmother's Name:** A box for the grandmother's name.
 - Enw'r gŵyn/ Grandfather's Name:** A box for the grandfather's name.
 - Enw'r gŵyn/ Grandmother's Name:** A box for the grandmother's name.
 - Enw'r gŵyn/ Grandfather's Name:** A box for the grandfather's name.
- Additional Information:** A box for 'Gwybodaeth ychwanegol/ Additional Information'.
- Contact Information:** A box for 'Llofnod/ Contact'.

(Source: Flying Start)

Bronfenbrenner (2005) showed the importance of working together through his work with children and their families. Working with parents and other professionals, he developed an ecological model which is a series of circles to indicate a child's influences on their lives and outcomes.

The microsystem is important for a child to have consistent care and the holistic approach of everyone working together. Both home and setting have an influence on a child's social development and behaviour.

The next circle (the mesosystem) impacts the child but not as directly however if good relationships formed between these are those in the microsystem the children's development benefited.



(Source Bronfenbrenner's ecological model)

Bronfenbrenner identified a change or conflict in any other circle would have detrimental effects to the other circles therefore impacting a child's outcomes. It is therefore vital key workers build relationships and work together with everyone involved in a child's life to give the child the best chance of reaching their full potential and outcomes.

According to the National Society for the prevention of cruelty to children (NSPCC) (2019), everyone who works with children has the responsibility to share any information that affects a child. It is also vital for practitioners to build trusting relationships with others for the benefit of the child and family and for all to feel equally respected and listened to. The Department for Education (2017) says that great parenting and high-quality provision provides the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities.

Flying Start (2013) was introduced to provide early years with a high-quality environment and provision. The staff are highly qualified, experienced and continually monitored by a specialist team. All childcare settings have access to support from many other professionals which means there is a great support network around the child and family in line with Bronfenbrenner's theory of having the best outcomes for a child.

It is important as a key worker that time is taken to read this information and the parent's information, this will help a child settle quickly and ensure an attachment is made.

According to Trodd (2013), it is hard for both parents and keyworkers to predict how the child will respond to being left. It is also a sensitive time for the parent and so they will also need to be supported through the process. If guidance is needed you can refer to the settling in policy of the setting.

It is critical to respect and value parents and recognise that each child is unique, advising them that children are usually upset on the second day after learning they will be left. The child will be happier once they develop a relationship with you, but it is critical to establish a positive relationship with the parents from the start. Separation anxiety affects both the parent and the child and having a positive relationship with the parents aids in the process by ensuring the child's needs are met and new attachments are formed.

According to Lindon (2005), good practice with under threes and the foundation phase stress that emotional security and warm relationships allow for healthy development. One key factor for this development is the importance of attachment. McLeod (2017) suggests that Bowlby's attachment theory, children get increasingly distressed when they are separated from the main care giver. It is therefore important to build an attachment in setting with their designated keyworker because if they do not feel secure in the early years this can have an impact on the

child with bonds and relationships later in life. Bowlby also believed a critical time for attachment was two and half years. It is thanks to Bowlby that the role of the keyworker remains important in early years provision today.

Critten and Clousoon (2000) state that attachments are based on how a child interacts with an adult who is looking after them. If the adult responds and comforts them when needed this reassures them, giving the child the confidence to feel secure enough to explore. This confidence and environment will develop good self-esteem which will result in better outcomes. If an attachment is not made the child may be unresponsive to you, become withdrawn and anxious or may even give up trying to have their needs met. As a key worker it is important to understand all children are unique and how they respond to you and how you interact back may be different to every individual child.

The role of the adult

As a keyworker, it is vital to ensure all information is known about an individual child, their family and background. All children are different, some children will transition confidently whereas others may stand back and observe before interacting with other children and the unfamiliar environment. It will benefit the child if you are knowledgeable about a child's ethnicity and language, familiar sights and sounds will help them settle.

Effective communication is important within the early years. Dunhill (2009) states that keyworkers must be aware of issues that may occur around communication, when working with many different families there are many different ethnic groups, values, beliefs, and languages, it is important to involve both parents and children and a key worker should always remain respectful. Key workers are responsible for communicating with parents, keeping them informed of their child's time at the setting and passing on any information or concerns. A smooth transition would take place if all involved in the care of the child have positive communication links. To promote continuity, it is important to have a shared approach.

The role of the adult is to know the importance of play. The Welsh Government (2002) view play as a necessity to a child's holistic growth socially, physically, emotionally, mentally, and creatively. Providing a stimulating environment which allows the child to explore open ended resources. According to Thornton and Brunton (2010), and the Reggio approach, the adult's role is to watch and listen to see what the children say and do to extend the child's learning. Through watching children play we can observe and evaluate provision and make changes for future provision and outcomes. Montessori inspired us to have a high-quality environment which is child sized and inviting to a child. The setting is planned to allow inclusion to all children with learning through play as the main philosophy. The setting is adapted regularly depending on the physical needs of the children who attend. Children learn through firsthand experiences, and all have the right to play as called for in article 31 of United convention rights of the child (1989). Wales is the first country to legislate for children's play (Welsh Government, 2002)

As a key worker it is vital to always be a good role model for the children, a social learning theorist by the name of Bandura taught us that children learn from observing others, through observation, replication, and modelling. According to Cherry (2021), he developed the

observation learning theory which states that children learn from watching others. The process involves watching the behaviour of others, retaining the information, and then later replicating it.

Froebel believed play to be important for children to help reflect and understand themselves as well as others around them. It is important to let a child play, build their social skills and know when to step back or when to intervene. Provision should be provided to allow children to think for themselves and they should be able to grow and develop at their own pace.

Cullata (2021) states that Vygotsky taught us that although the environment plays a big part in a child's learning. His theory of cognitive development states that there needs to be interaction between a child and adult and the adult's role is to scaffold a child's learning. It is important to have a balance of child led and adult led activities. Observing how a child is learning and planning for their future development.

Interventions

Every child is individual, and every child will transition differently. With positive communication between parents and keyworkers an effective way can be found for every child. The settling in policy states some children may settle better if they start the setting for a certain amount of time and do not complete the full session. It is vital to go with the needs of a child and is flexible to each child and family.

The children are invited to the setting on a visit with the parents to meet the staff, keyworker and see what the environment is like, have a play and a look around. Information is gathered from the parents on child's likes dislikes. This helps the key worker remember certain items they could use to distract a child if they get upset or plan for their needs and development. Some children may wish to bring a transitional object.

The families are welcomed into the setting and given a nursery handbook which they can ask questions about and take home afterwards. It gives clear information about the setting, its staff qualifications and training. It explains the importance of learning through play, the healthy eating menu and about the design to smile toothbrushing programme. Parents are informed of the policies /procedures of the setting and copies are available if requested.

A child with an additional learning needs also transitions into the setting with a this is me information. Here all professionals who work around the child are listed. Flying start (2017) states this is a key element to providing a holistic approach to meet the needs of the child

A child is given a peg with their picture on here they will recognise themselves and have a place to find their belongings.

On a child's first session we recommend to the parent to come a bit earlier than the session end time as a new child usually gets upset once they notice other parents are collecting children and so it is important for them to be one of the first to leave and not get distressed which would affect them wanting to come back on another day.

The role of the keyworker is to observe the child, support them where needed and give feedback to the parents at the end of the session.

Class Dojo is an app used to message the parents easily and send photos of the children to let the parents see they are happy and settled. Class dojo allows us to send a message in many languages therefore allowing for inclusion and equality to all families. This enables us to follow article 2 of the United convention the rights of the child (1989) children have the right regardless of their culture or language identity. This allows a family to feel included and involved. Involving parents in activities gives a strategy of empowerment and has the potential to improve a child's life (Dunhill, Elliot and Shaw 2009).

Outcomes

To have a stimulating experience in a high-quality environment, which is a safe base for children to learn and explore. To follow the four purposes of the curriculum, which is designed to help children become: ambitious learners; enterprising, creative contributors; ethically informed citizens, and healthy confident individuals ready to lead fulfilling lives. All this begins with a positive transition which leads to a child having their own voice and making their own choices.

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