
*Transitions and how
Practitioners can Support Children*



West Barns Primary School. (no date)

The importance of effective communication

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Introduction

This handbook is intended for those who work within the early year's sector on how to support the rising 3's who are transitioning from Flying Start to nursery school. The purpose of this handbook is to provide practitioners with information about this particular transition within the child's life, the effects on the child's development and how they can support them through this with effective communication and partnerships. The purpose of this handbook is to facilitate practitioners and parent/carers with the understanding of what transitions mean, how they can support this transitional stage, the effect on the children's holistic needs, how practitioners can make sure they are meeting the child's individual needs and rights, as well as how to communicate effectively during these transitions with the children and their parents/carers and other multiagency professionals.

During this transition stage, practitioners must keep in mind the child's right (article 12) to have a voice and express an opinion on matters that affect them and have their views taken seriously, we must also not forget that the child's age and developmental maturity in to account when communicating about the transition to nursery school, (Trodd, L. 2013 p. 15). This handbook will also look at the proposed outcomes that practitioners, parents/carers, other professionals and children would like to achieve from effective communication and positive relationships through partnerships, with the idea to improve the quality of care, communication and working together during children's transitions from Flying Start to nursery school.

Transitions

Transitions are stages in life, where children will move through different milestones such as going to school/playgroup or going through changes at home for example moving house or welcoming a new baby. Transitions could also be as simple as going from the house to the car then on to school/park/friend's house. It is important that practitioners are able to support children through this transitional stage from Flying Start to nursery school along with supporting their parents/carers as this transition can be an emotional time for children and their parents/carers.

Early Years Matters (EYM), (no date), mentions that transition are not one single event that will just happen and is an opportunity for growth and different learning

opportunities for children, this can be exciting for children but also an uncertain time due to different surroundings, expectations and procedures, EYM, (no date), states that **“Transition has been described as an ongoing journey rather than a destination”**. This is further supported by Brooker, L. (2008, p. 5), who mentions that Fabian and Dunlop (2002) and Pentriswsky *et al* (2005), both describe transitions as an ongoing change, process and adaptation of going from one setting to another setting, such as going from a Flying Start setting to nursery school.

The needs of the child

During the transitions period between Flying Start and nursery school, practitioners must make sure that they are able to meet the needs of the children and ensure that they are recognising the children’s rights (within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)) to have a voice and be taken seriously (Article 12) and as well as Article 13 the freedom expression, being able to have access to information (within the law) and be able to express their thoughts and feelings ([UNCRC summary-1 1.pdf \(unicef.org.uk\)](#), no date). Practitioners must also keep in mind the UNCRC’s articles 28 and 29 which state that children have the right to education and the goals of education.

During the transition stage practitioners must keep these rights in mind, they are also supported by Johann Pestalozzi, who states that children have an equal right to education and should be able to have the scope to be able to gain from it. Pestalozzi also states that traditional education and learning had little concern about children’s interest and experiences and that it was tedious, he contemplated that children’s natural capabilities should be fostered organically through nature and encouraged to examine and explore solid and physical objects.

Pound, L. (2005, p. 9) mentions that Pestalozzi stated that **“Progress from the familiar to the new should be in a loving and secure environment”**. He mentions that security in the home helps to give children the origin of their reality and is the foundation of children’s learning and that providing children with social interaction, love and work can form the basis of children’s development (Pound, L. 2005, p.9). Similarly, Abraham Maslow (1943) developed a hierarchy of needs (see image below): -



(Image from Pichère, P. and Cadiat, A.-C. Maslow's hierarchy of needs. 2015 p. 5)

Maslow has five stages of hierarchy, the first being Physiological, in simple terms this level is where children's basic needs and functions relating to personal survival, these are needs such as eating, drinking, breathing, personal care, to name a few. These are vital needs and form the basis of children's individual needs and can surpass the need for things like security and esteem. The next step is security, this doesn't just relate to physical integrity but this isn't the only category that security can apply to, it can also relate to things like protection against theft and damage, children will need their needs of love, social and affection (similar to Pestalozzi) are met as well as having a sense of security to have a need to belonging, this like Pestalozzi, Maslow mentions that this is where practitioners and parents/carers will need to take the social nature of the human being.

These stages of Maslow's hierarchy of needs along with Pestalozzi's theory can relate to children during the transition period from Flying Start to Nursery School, as the transition period can be a time of excitement and joy but can also be an anxious and uncertain time for children to go through. By ensuring that practitioners are able to develop strong and positive bonds with children through a keyworker system, communication and working with parents/carers and other multiagency professionals and have the knowledge to meet the needs and right of the child during this stage they can ensure that children feel a sense of belonging, safe throughout the transition and that their needs of love, affection and social interaction are being met. This will promote positive interactions with children. When the children's basic needs, a sense of security and a sense of belonging have been met children will be able to have the tools to move on to the next stage of Maslow's hierarchy is the need of esteem/recognition, this stage is where within society, children (as they grow) will develop a sense of employment, power, status and money. The final stage is personal accomplishment, within Maslow's theory he mentions that the lower level needs will depend on the perception of others, this top need will be connected with how children will develop their individuality and personality.

According to Maslow, the needs that children will go through will depend on the individual wishes of the child and will take any form as long as they met the child's wishes, he also touches on that the needs of each level will need to be satisfied before moving on the next, for example someone may lack the sense of belonging if they feel unsafe and uncertain during a transition stage. (Pichère, P. and Cadiat, A.-C. 2015 p. 5-6).

The role of the adult

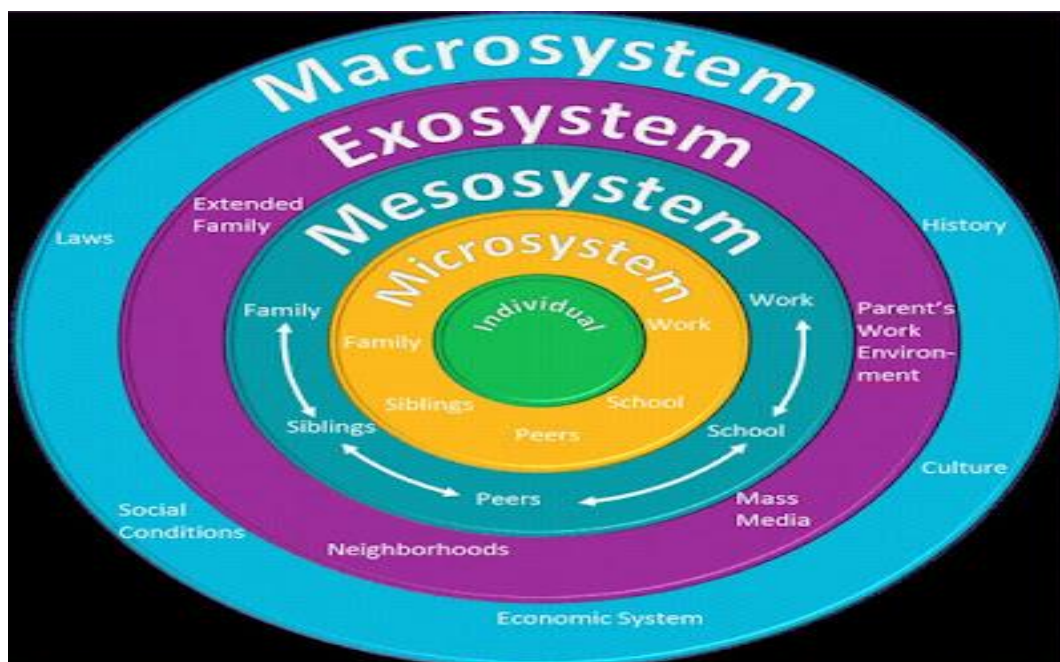
The role of the adult /practitioner will be to develop a positive and knowledgeable relationship with children and their parents/carers. Children will be allocated a keyworker when they initially start at Flying Start, with the purpose to develop a secure and encouraging relationship to help the children transition in to the setting. This relationship will continue to grow and become stronger during their time at the Flying Start and will help support them during the transition in to nursery school. These bonds will have formed over social interactions, observations, planning for the child's interest and needs with their rights kept at the forefront of practitioners minds.

Through the keyworker system, practitioners are able to support and monitor the initial transition to nursery school, working with parents/carers and other team members. Keyworkers are able to hand over information through one page profiles, I am Threes, all about me forms, these will include information such as children's interest, practical needs, emotional/social support, any additional support with additional needs, such as what works/what doesn't work/where help is needed. These will be completed with the children and their parents/carers. Practitioners can also support and help their key children get ready for the transition to their nursery school by talking about the visits, discussing teachers, that they are going to see what's available, where toilets and what they may need to wear and who they are going to school with. Staff will also need sufficient time to gather information about the child, such as if they are vulnerable/addtional learning needs and have the opportunity to liaise with other professionals whom may be involved. (Flying Start, May 2017, p. 36, 41, 47).

The keyworker system embraces the attachment theory; attachment theory originates form the theorist John Bowlby. Bowlby began to observe children through an evolutionary point of view rather than a psychological viewpoint. Bowlby put forward that

children, with their reliance on their mothers, will develop certain behaviours that will keep their mothers near them. This is similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs as Bowlby theorised that **"...these behaviours were essential to infants' survival..."** (Watson, M. 2018, p.15-40). In essence, Bowlby's attachment theory suggests that when a caregiver interacts with a child and supports their development and meets their needs, this becomes necessary to giving them a successful life. Being able to socialise through interactions, children are able to develop the skills they need to grow but also gives them a sense of self belief and a belief in those around them, Bowlby suggests that the way children develop progress is the result of children's nature and the caregivers (or mother's) behaviours.

In 1979, Urie Bronfenbrenner developed his theory on the ecology of human development, following five environmental stages that children will move through, as shown in the image below: -



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2017

Within Bronfenbrenner's theory first environmental stage that is closest to the child, the Microsystem, consists of family, siblings, peers, school and work. The environments that will be most common for the child will be either the classroom or home, these will enable children to have multiple interactions with not only family members but also friends/peers, community members such a neighbours, childcare practitioners and teachers. Within these first environmental stage children will develop an initial understanding of social interactions, rules and behaviours. Bronfenbrenner advocates that within the Mesosystem stage the regularity and quality of the relationships formed enriched children's development when

strong links have helped form strong links from the Microsystem. Aubrey and Riley (2009, p. 154) mention that Bronfenbrenner later observed that “... **the individual as being key to how interactions within the environment influenced development.**”. When comparing Bronfenbrenner’s theory to Bowlby’s theory of attachment and the Keyworker System mentioned within Flying Start’s transition Annex, they are all quite similar in suggesting that having strong relationships with a key adult has a positive effect of children’s holistic wellbeing and development that can be beneficial for children during the transition stage from a Flying Start to Nursery School.

Partnerships

Intervention

Proposed outcomes

References