

A Guidance Handbook for Early Years keyworkers during childhood transitions.



(Source: Image posted May 15, 2019 by Lucy – parent and practitioner education)

<https://www.theearlyyearstraininghub.co.uk/en/f2f-course/moving-up,-moving-on--managing-transitions-from-early-years-to-key-stage-1>. (Accessed: 24th of November 2020).

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Introduction

The main purpose of this booklet is to provide advice on the basis of researched successful transitional practise for all early years practitioners who serve children and their families during that process. For all transitions from home to flying start, and from flying start to nursery, this guidance is important.

Research indicates that changes are central to the growth and emotional well-being of young children, and the manner in which the first transitions are treated could have a big effect on the ability of the child to cope with change in the short and long term. Practitioners in the early years should ensure that children are adequately assisted during these primary changes and prepare adequately for them. (Elizabeth walker, cronery.co.uk accessed date 23rd November 2020).

According to Sue Allingham, definition of transition is any kind of change that may alter the routine that the children and sometimes the adult are used to.

Every child undergoes his or her own transition within the play group. Many children in the environment have a difficulty with the transition from wet to dry especially during the Toilet training period. Clothing habits can be distressing for children with clear preferences and sensory difficulties.

(Transition in the early years: *A practical guide to supporting children between early years setting and into key stage 1* written by Sue Allingham August 2015).

Transitions are part of everyone's life and can be challenging.

Children will eventually find that the world is a secure and predictable place when any kind of changes and improvements are embraced by sensitive, educated adults. (www.education.gov.scotland Accessed 20th of November 2020)

The role of the adult

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was interested in how cultural elements are passed on to new generations. His sociocultural theory declares that social interaction within the family and with knowledgeable members of the community is the primary means by which children acquire behaviours and cognitive processes relevant to their own society.

Adult or peer intervention in this context is thus an essential part of the development process. This concept underpins the notion of 'scaffolding' in which a more knowledgeable other provides support to promote a child's cognitive development.

For Vygotsky, children were apprentices who learned from and alongside those with greater experience who understood their abilities. Piaget believed child development was universal, whilst Vygotsky maintained each culture provides different tools of intellectual adaptation. Some societies rely on notetaking to store information, whereas oral cultures value memorisation and rote learning.

<https://www.firstdiscoverers.co.uk/lev-vygotsky-child-development-theories/>

Children will also have to experience changes in their family life that need extra assistance from practitioners in the early years. Separation or divorce of parents, a new sibling, moving to a new house or the death of a family member include other forms of changes that children may experience.

A variety of feelings or a sense of loss may be encountered by children going through these changes. Staff can collaborate with children and their families to create a healthy atmosphere in which the unique needs of the child can be supported. To help transfers, it is important to establish a stable attachment with a key worker.

Practitioners in the early years play an important role in helping children as they experience extreme emotional anger. It may help to alleviate the anxiety of a child by sticking to familiar routines, such as going to nursery. For children's play, it is normal to represent what is going on around them and this is a healthy response that should be encouraged. Practitioners in the early years can help children by reading or sharing stories about change or loss related to the age of the child.

<https://www.early-education.org.uk/transitions>.

Understanding the common functions of nature and nurture also allows one to understand why siblings are so distinct from each other often. Just half of the genetic factors influencing their growth are shared by siblings of the same mum and dad. As such, the genetic structure of siblings is partially different, and this is one explanation for sibling variations.

Sometimes, siblings elicit varying responses from their parents. For one child but not for another a parenting style may work. Siblings, despite being raised by the same people, could prefer different environments and exhibit different tastes in toys, people, eating and napping habits.

Many aspects are partially due to our genes, but this doesn't mean that our environment can't help or fix them. Sleep disorders that continue into infancy, for example, are partially inherited. Yet we know that adjusting something in the world of our child, such as routine and at night using black-out blinds, will help solve these problems. It is difficult to pin down just how much of the personality of that child is due to nature and how much is nurtured. It's a bit of both, we do know. The good news is that adult can still play an important part in the growth of that child.

<https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/emotional-and-social-development/how-do-nature-and-nurture-affect-my-childs-development> (Reviewed in August 2018)

The Need of the child

According to John Bowlby (1980) attachment theory, Toddlers aged 6-30 months are extremely likely to form secure emotional attachments to familiar caregivers. John Bowlby's attachment theory proposes that the establishment of relationships with caregivers is a critical feature of child development. Children who are securely attached at an early age tend to develop stronger self-esteem and better self-reliance as they mature.

In support of his observation Bowlby (1980) noted that a child capable of relying on a primary caregiver was less anxious than those without such reassurance. He also argued that this trust was the product of healthy growth from the infant to the adolescent stage and had a lifelong effect. <https://www.firstdiscoverers.co.uk/john-bowlby-child-development-theories/>

As active, curious, imaginative learners, Froebel saw children who learn best through activity, play, chat, when they are emotionally healthy and in close relationships with others, including the family and larger society, they succeed.

The tradition of teacher-led education which viewed children as passive learners was rejected by Froebel. He saw the earliest years of the life of a child as the most formative and the leading form of growth in play.

<https://www.froebel.org.uk>

It is very important that as a professional we understand the critical moment when the child starts their transition journey from home to flying start setting, there is an unseen anxiety, concern, emotions involved in the transition process.

Before their child starts, it can be beneficial to invite a parent to the environment for them to take part in such activities with their child. They can then determine as a parent, caregiver or responsible adult for that particular child if the child will be respected as an individual, feel protected, comfortable or enjoy being in the environment. (www.education.gov.scot accessed date 20th of November).

It will instil a greater sense of security by allowing for special time with a new key person. Environments and routines that promote shared efforts or special time in small groups are invaluable for children to develop new friendships and to develop a sense of security after a transition. (www.education.org.uk accessed date 20th of November 2020).

Practitioners must ensure that the receiving environment/school is mindful of the progress of the child and his/her potential developmental needs in order to achieve a smooth transition. This should provide details on the various methods that have functioned in the field of childcare and the facilities and activities used. If adaptations or specialist equipment are necessary, details should be given well in advance for the Foundation Phase environment.

Supporting the transfer of children with additional learning needs

A great deal of work will be needed if children with additional learning needs move from Flying Start to the Foundation Phase or specialist school to ensure that they have the assistance they need and that parents are happy with the arrangements.

For families of children with additional needs, change can be especially difficult and careful attention should be given to the adjustment process. Families will be worried about how their child will settle and whether they will understand the complexities of the needs of their child. They may need more visits and opportunities than other children to visit the environment and get to know the staff. It could be helpful to include images of the environment, including pictures of staff, toilets and front entrance, for children especially helpful for children with speech, language and communication needs and children on the autism spectrum.

The current Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (or Additional Learning Needs) for Wales is followed. Where appropriate a child's particular needs are met through the provision of special equipment. (www.gov.wales accessed date 23rd of November 2020).

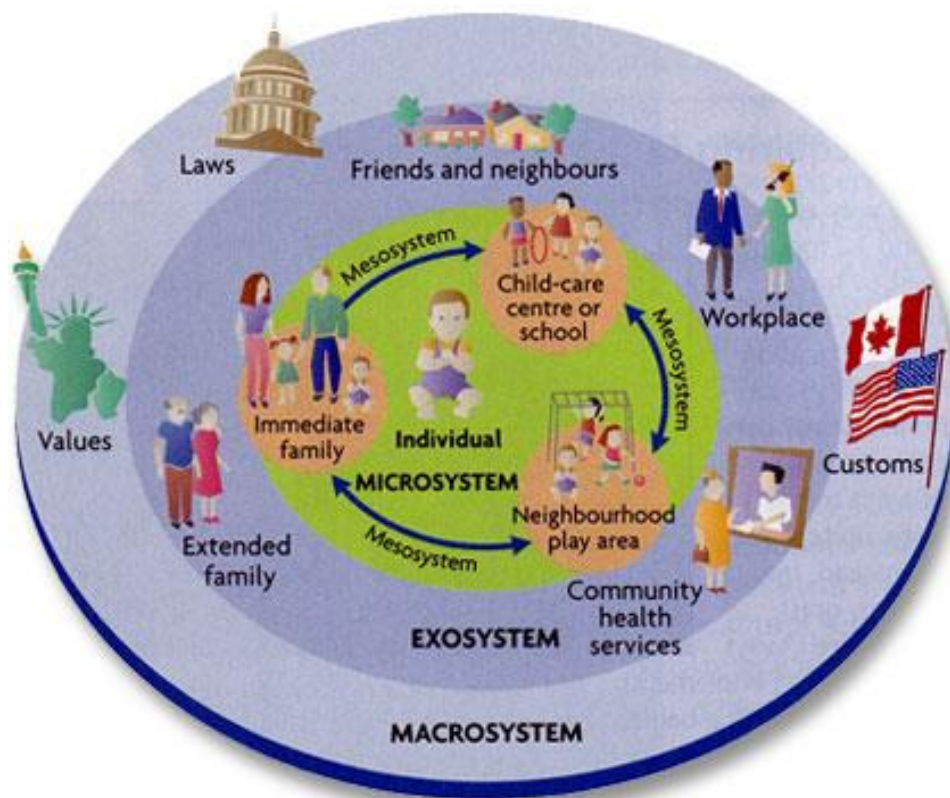


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory
(in Berk & Roberts, 2009, p. 28)

https://www.beststart.org/OnTrack_English/2-promotehealth.html (Accessed date 27th November 2020)

Partnerships

The definition of Bronfenbrenner depicts four ecological systems with which a person can theoretically communicate, each nesting within the others.

1. Microsystem-This is the first and closest layer of the nested structures that covers the human relationships, interpersonal interactions and most immediate environments of an individual. The relationship between an individual child and his/her parents, siblings, and the school environment is thus demonstrated.

2. The second layer around the microsystem includes the various interactions between the characters found within the microsystem, going outwards. This could include, for example, the relationships between the family of a child and their teachers at school.

To qualify as part of the mesosystem for any interaction, it must be a direct interaction between two features of the bio-ecological system that affect the individual child's growth.

3. The third layer is the exosystem that includes components of bio-ecological systems that do not directly affect the infant but can have an indirect effect. For example, if a parent were to be made redundant or reduce their working hours, this would indirectly impact their child in that such incidents would cause parental stress and decrease the income of the family.

4. Macrosystem-The bio-ecological model's outermost, "macro" layer contains cultural and societal values, decisions and behaviours that affect the growth of an individual child. This may include religious influences or parliamentary legislation, for instance.

The bio-ecological approach of Bronfenbrenner allows practitioners to understand the true balance of forces that are likely to play a role in every young child's growth.

<https://www.firstdiscoverers.co.uk/child-development-theories-urie-bronfenbrenner/>

Often, due to a change in circumstances, a child has to move to a new nursery or childminder. Separation anxiety affects both parents and children, and in easing this process, warm exchanges between practitioners and family members are incredibly valuable. Transfer assessment, reviews, progress reports and learning journeys in good time and share vital details on the heritage, language and social skills of a child. Settings would also establish partnerships with providers operating groups such as 'Parent and Toddler' and settings could plan for children to visit while in near geographical proximity in order to become acquainted with the staff and the environment's layout. <https://www.early-education.org.uk/transitions>

To check on the development of an infant, health visitors can also drop in on childcare settings. This helps the health visitor to remain in tune with the development of the infant, enabling the health visitor to provide any specific assistance that might be required. The environment will build supportive interactions with Flying Start health visitors and all other relevant practitioners, such as speech therapists and language

therapists, who can provide additional details about children who may be vulnerable at the moment of transition.

[https://www.pacey.org.uk/Pacey/media/Website-files/PACEY%20member%20practice%20guides%20\(PDFs\)/PG28-Theories-of-child-development.pdf](https://www.pacey.org.uk/Pacey/media/Website-files/PACEY%20member%20practice%20guides%20(PDFs)/PG28-Theories-of-child-development.pdf)

The transition process can be facilitated by sharing resources such as allotments, gardens or forest schools in regions where Flying Start childcare settings are in close proximity or co-located with Foundation Phase settings. The ability to engage in circle time or other appropriate activities should be provided to help children familiarise themselves with their new environment. The Foundation phase teacher may also be invited to share stories or songs and rhyme time in the childcare environment. Children should have the chance to visit the foundation phase setting or attend tester session which allows them to become comfortable with the new environment. In certain areas, children may also have casual visits with their parents to the Foundation Phase setting and will also meet staff members when they attend scheduled activities such as concerts, sports days and fundraising events.

https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/214826/mod_resource/content/1/141124-transition-guidance-en-v1.pdf

Interventions

Adequate time and resources should be provided to staff to plan for all aspects of the transition, including accessing, reading and exchanging information about children. Staff should be aware of those children who may be vulnerable and/or have additional learning needs and liaise with other professionals who may be involved with particular children.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/flying-start-transition-guidance-for-professionals.pdf>

Practitioners should ensure that the receiving environment/school is aware of the progress of the child and his/her potential developmental needs in order to achieve a smooth transition. This should provide details on the unique methods that have performed in the field of childcare and the facilities and operations used. If adaptations or specialist equipment are required, details should be given to the foundation phase setting well in advance.

It can be an overwhelming and upsetting experience for many children to leave the childcare environment and start in a new Foundation Phase setting. If they do not move with them, children can feel sad about leaving their present environment and leaving their key worker and their friends. A scrapbook will provide a permanent reminder and memento of the time of the child in the environment. This may include their friends' pictures, key staff, and favourite activity.

Individual profiles provide relevant information about the needs and abilities of a child in the Foundation Phase environments, thereby helping schools to plan for the next steps of a child in learning and address any defined needs.
www.centreforearlyinterventionwales.co.uk

According to 'flying start transition booklet' With parental consent, the childcare setting or other relevant Flying Start staff should notify the Foundation Phase school/setting about the additional needs of children as early as possible so that they can plan effectively to meet those needs. Any documentation should be passed on as early as possible, preferably with a face-to-face meeting, which includes parents. A One Page Profile or an 'All About Me' type information card can be written with the child/ parents and professionals which can be sent to the receiving Foundation Phase setting.
https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/214826/mod_resource/content/1/141124-transition-guidance-en-v1.pdf (Accessed date 18th of November 2020)

Proposed Outcomes

It is the duty of the registered individual to ensure that:

The settling-in process and separation from parents or caregivers minimises anxiety and depression.

The individual needs of each child, including any specific educational needs and disabilities, are prepared for and given. Reasonable steps are taken when particular needs are recognised, and the child's well-being and growth is encouraged in cooperation with parents and other relevant parties.

<https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Schools-and-learning/Early-years-and-child-care/Early-years-support-and-advice-for-children-with-additional-needs/Pages/Support-and-advice-for-children-with-additional-needs.aspx>

Planning handovers between professionals is important to ensure that the needs of children are addressed, and new attachments are reinforced. Without this, we run the risk of losing faith among children, which can lead to a decline in awareness and understanding. It is important to note that the entire family can be affected by any changes and parents will also need help. Staff should provide information in a welcoming and competent manner, such as advice line numbers and details of recommended professional bodies.

<https://www.early-education.org.uk/transitions>

It is important that all employees of Flying Start are aware of what Flying Start support is available to families. The Family Information Service is a vital resource that provides families, health visitors and other delivery partners with up-to-date information about the resources available to help families in the region. Staff should also be aware of how to refer families, if needed, to more specialised services.

Staff should collaborate with admissions teams from local authorities to ensure that parents complete paperwork accurately and in time to properly assign places.

Staff should be familiar with admission forms and criteria for the Foundation Process, including submission dates,

The childcare setting leader should complete the person profile, with feedback from the key worker and with help from the Advisory Teacher. The human profile should be Shared with parents, with the ability to add details that they feel is significant. There must be parental consent to share this information. If parental consent cannot be obtained and there is vital information that should be passed on the Flying Start health visitor of the child should be consulted and

Ideally, in a face-to-face meeting, the pack should be handed over which offers an opportunity for a conversation about the child, since this is a very productive way of exchanging formation.

https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/214826/mod_resource/content/1/141124-transition-guidance-en-v1.pdf

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<https://www.froebel.org.uk> (accessed date 19th of November 2020)

<https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Schools-and-learning/Early-years-and-child-care/Early-years-support-and-advice-for-children-with-additional-needs/Pages/Support-and-advice-for-children-with-additional-needs.aspx> (accessed date (accessed date 20th November 2020)

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<https://www.firstdiscoverers.co.uk/lev-vygotsky-child-development-theories/>
accessed date 18th of November 2020)
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