

An Early Years Practitioners Handbook:
A guide to Transitions



[source: Clipartmax 2019]

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Introduction

This handbook will give the practitioner a guide to provide the best possible transition experiences and outcomes for young children starting a childcare setting for the first time. It's specifically designed for practitioners working with children ages 3-4 in their first year of school (nursery class).

This book aims to help childcare professionals provide the best possible support and care for young children during their first day of care. It will also introduce them to the various concepts and procedures that are necessary for a successful transition.

In 2005, the UNCRC stated the importance of recognizing the rights of young children and babies, and their ability to communicate their needs. Having the right to a safe and secure home is important for a child's development.

Dewey (2017) has stated that children should be at the center of their learning and that their development is formed around their interactions with their caregivers and teachers. This means that children do not have a 'passive' experience when they interact with others.

What are transitions?

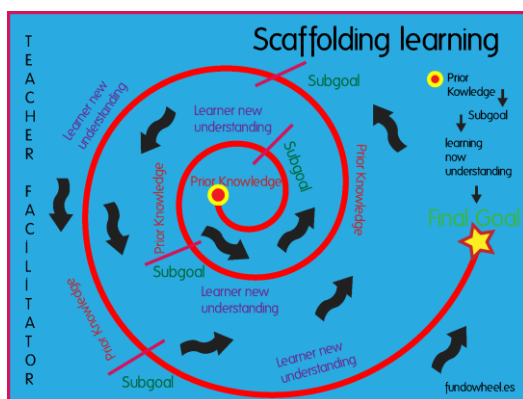
Transition is the process in which an individual encounters a move into a new environment that requires him or her to adapt to an unfamiliar setting. In the context of early childhood education, transition occurs when a child moves from preschool to primary school. (Poon, 2019).

Many children will experience transitions during their early years, and beyond this age. A transition is a period of change that occurs in a person's life that can alter their daily routine. For instance, a two-year-old may start going to preschool for the first time.

Piaget (1978) envisaged these psychological stages as driven by a process of equilibration. He suggested that children develop schemata to represent their understanding of the world, and that they try to assimilate the world to these schemata until too much external contradiction forces a change and re-equilibration of their world view.

Vygotsky (1978), referring to the distance between the most difficult task a child can perform without help and the most difficult task s/he can do with support. It is therefore through the instruction from teachers, adults and more skilled peers that children learn and develop. Post-Vygotskian researchers developed the idea of 'scaffolding' to capture the assistance children receive from their peers and adult instructors in reaching new developmental goals.

Bruner, like Vygotsky, emphasized the social nature of learning, citing that other people should help a child develop skills through the process of scaffolding. ... Scaffolding involves helpful, structured interaction between an adult and a child with the aim of helping the child achieve a specific goal.

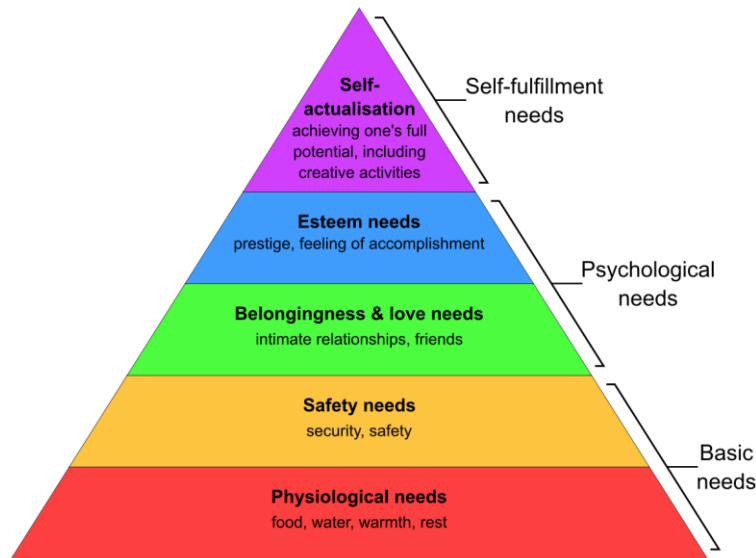


[Source:fundowheel.es 2015]

Jones (2018) talks about Vygotsky saw children as active agents in their environment, and that they could create their own conditions of development. He differs from Piaget in that he sees learning as a process that occurs through cultural and social processes.

Needs of the child

Maslow's theory (TES, 2019) suggests that to achieve full potential or self-actualization, a human must have their basic needs met in order to move to the next requirements of need and so on. This is shown in his pyramid model:



[Source: Wikipedia 2021]

Maslow's Hierarchy of Need can be applied to the way care must be given to children. That basic needs are met, while essential, is not enough. Good practice in childcare means that great emphasis is placed on meeting the psychological needs of children too. Support of the child's wellbeing and self-worth are written into policy. (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2016)

The hierarchy of needs has influenced the way schools and classrooms organize and communicate.

Free access to a healthy snack for break time is a key component of the school's overall wellbeing philosophy. It is also important that children have a safe and stimulating place to play.

The attachment theory was developed by Bowlby, Van der Horst, and Van der Veer in the 20th century. It states that healthy

development is affected by the relationship between a child and their parents.

For every child, there are basic needs that must be met for them to develop and grow up. These needs are met in every environment.

Children need to experience and learn about the world around them.

Rich in Play is a play program that encourages children to integrate all their new experiences into their bodies, minds, and social skills.

The role of the teacher is critical to a child's development. Teachers are role models and are responsible for developing a child's academic success. One of the reasons that children do not get enough exposure to other people is that society tends to exclude them from the many people who live in a nearby village. Young children need to feel significant. In the past, children were expected to do household chores, such as watering the garden and care for younger kids. A child's need to belong is a basic human need. It can be met by finding a place that fits their needs and their families' needs.

When transitioning from home to a nursery setting, it is important that the practitioner has a plan in place to accommodate the child's needs and interests. By observing each child, this method can help develop a relationship that is based on mutual respect and common goals. Visits from the preschool or nursery are important to help the child get used to the new environment. Make sure that the learning environment fits their individual needs. This will help them develop their understanding of what they already know.

A wise practitioner will help a child develop their own interests and knowledge within their own interests. This will enable them to make their own decisions and decisions. (Lindon,2010)

Montessori (2018) believed that every educator should "follow the child", recognizing the evolutionary needs and characteristics of each age, and building a favorable environment, both physical and spiritual, to respond to these needs.

It is important to promote the balance of stimulation to develop the brain. According to Evans and Rice (2016), too much stimulation can lead to a negative effect on brain development. Harvard University researchers believe that children tend to benefit from a service and return environment that is rich in interaction.

The role of an adult.

During a child's very early life, they will form strong bonds with their primary care giver, usually their mother, this is known as attachment.

Early years practitioners must support a child's transition from preschool to primary school to help them develop the necessary skills and build their confidence. They also have the responsibility to help them set up their own routines and prove their own goals.

It is the responsibility of the management of the setting to ensure proper procedures are in place and NMS are met. Staff must be kept up to date on regulations and be reflective on their practice.

All settings are required by their registration to follow the National Minimum Standards. This is a comprehensive set of mandatory guidelines which must be followed and applied to the setting practice. (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2016).

Childcare practitioners need to be fully aware of how important their role is in ensuring smooth transitions. Montessori recognized that it is essential that practitioners are properly qualified in child development and education to carry out their work effectively and successfully. Planning and facilitating are key to this approach. (Aubrey and Riley 2016).

When children leave the home to start the educational system, the parents need to be sensitive to ensure that their child's transition is managed properly. (Croneri, 2021)

Communication.

Communication is an essential component of a good relationship between a child and their parents/carers. This is evidenced in the Common Core Skills for Children's Workforce. Communication is key! Effective communication makes transitions throughout the setting smoother. It paves the way for open feedback where parents feel comfortable raising concerns with their childcare provider, knowing it will be heard and addressed in a comfortable & safe environment. It can help keep children safe (Iris 2021).

How can a practitioner develop a trusting and positive relationship with parents/carers ?

- Get them involved in sessions.
- Communicate often.
- Ensure language is no barrier.
- Learn their names.
- Try not to make assumptions.
- Invite parents to share their skills, culture or traditions.

Bandura believes that children are trained to observe the different ways in which people behave in their surroundings, whether they're male or female, the actions of these people can be copied by children. It is also possible that they will display them later. It is important for a child to be rewarded for positive behavior to build self-esteem and develop a positive attitude. An endorsement is an inner support that a person feels excited about. It's not about the support itself, but the things that it thinks are important to bring approval. There are also a lot of people that children may identify

with. These people have certain characteristics that motivate them to want to be associated with them.

Bandura, A. (1977)

Partnership.

During the transition, the child is the center of the process. It is important that practitioners are aware of all the influences in the child's life. It is your job as a keyworker to keep the parents informed of how their child is progressing each day. Daily chats are vital to building these strong, trusting relationships and to ensure that the parents are involved in the process.



[Source: SlideShare 2015]

According to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, a partnership includes 'parents, families and practitioners working together to benefit children. ' For a partnership to work well, it must be built on trust, transparency and responsibility from all parties involved.

Through ongoing observations and evaluation, additional support can be acquired for a child. The goal of a multi-agency approach, which is supported by various professionals, is to build on the abilities and practical ways to support children, Jones et al. (2008).

The key person must acknowledge the responsibilities of the parents in their child's care and development. Families should be informed of support services that they may need.

The Family Information Service is a vital part of this process. The Family Information Service is one of the best avenues to follow in terms of finding relevant help. They are set up by all local authorities and are there to guide parents and families to find the help they need. The Welsh Government is committed to helping parents access relevant support for their children to ensure best outcomes. This support is based on the principles of the UNCRC and working in the best interests of the child. (Welsh Government 2017). The Family Information Service is a vital tool that can help

parents find the help they need. It is operated in all local authorities and can be reached by calling **0808 800 5000**.

Intervention.

This section of the handbook aims to help guide the transition process from one setting to another. It will include a variety of steps that will help the families and the setting get used to the new arrangements. Early intervention can help children and young people to develop the skills they need to live happy, healthy and successful lives. It can improve the quality of children's home

lives and family relationships, increase educational attainment and support good mental health. (EIF 2021).

Interventions are designed to support children through various stages of development. They are carried out in order to maintain close ties with their families. One of the most critical factors that a child should have the space to observe. This space should be organized in order to plan and implement effective interventions. To be able to assess the areas of need for a child and then plan suitable interventions, there must be space for observation which should be documented as discussed by Thornton and Brunton (2010) in the Reggio Approach to learning. Thornton and Brunton (2010) continue by suggesting there should be a balance in the daily routine where children are given time to play and discover through flexible opportunities to learn.

The National Minimum Standards are intended to guide settings in the correct practice of their settings. They can be developed and taken inspiration from best practice in other countries. In Wales, the Flying Start and Foundation Phase curriculums are used to ensure that children have equal access to the same opportunities throughout their lives. (Welsh government 2020)

Home visits - Home visits is a good way for the practitioner to get an idea on the child's day to day routine. It can help the practitioner

Importance of play.

“Play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being of children and youth” (Ginsberg, 2007, p. 182).