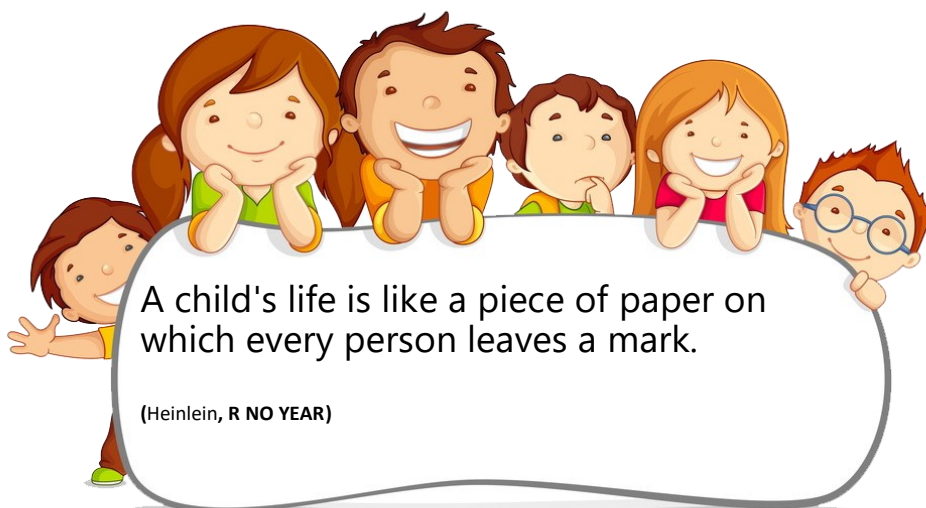




(Source: pngkey.com, 2018)

# Early Years transition guidance for practitioners



(Source: pnghut.com, 2020)

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# Introduction



(Educationalappstore.com 2019)

“Transitions are key events or processes of change over the life course. It is the process of change, that is experienced when children (and their families) move from one setting to another” Welsh Government (2017, P.3)

During their first years of life children will experience many changes. Children will progress from being at home with their parent/care giver in a secure place that they are familiar with to a new unfamiliar child care setting. These transitions can be from home to a nursery followed by primary school, all the way though to higher education later on in life.

Transitions are split into horizontal transitions and vertical transitions. Horizontal transitions happen daily and are the small movements and changes that children go through. Examples of a movement would be leaving a classroom to go to the lunch hall for dinner, whereas a change in routine may happen due to leaving school early for a medical appointment. Most children can cope with the horizontal transitions easily with little support. Vertical transitions are bigger events which do not occur regularly such as starting a new school/ childcare setting or changing classes. These can be much more difficult for children to deal with, they can experience a range of emotions and can have an effect of the child’s wellbeing. (open.edu 2017)

Transitioning to a new setting can be very difficult for the child and their family. It is important to build a trusted relationship to help both the child and their family feel at ease with the process. It is the role of the practitioner to plan a gradual transition where they get to know the child and their family, this can be done through taster sessions, welcome packs, letters and phone calls.

They should feel welcomed and that their concerns and worries are valued and understood.

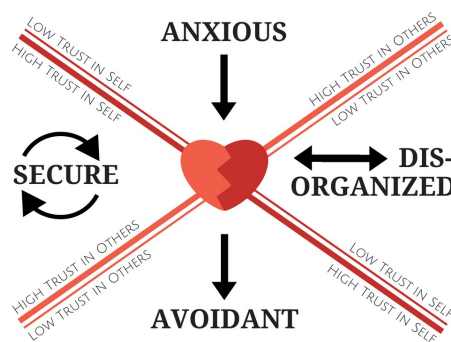
Building strong relations with the parent helps them to understand not just the transition process but the routine of the setting and the help that is available for them. If there is good communication with the parents they will feel more comfortable in discussing their child’s development and notify the practitioner or any issues the child is experiencing. Parents will be notified of the interventions available as well as outside agencies they can access through the setting. (Early education.org.uk 2020)

The relationship and communication between the parent and the practitioner can have an effect on the child. If there is limited socialisation and the child senses this it can make them feel unsettled and cautious to attend. These behaviours can then develop further having a detrimental effect of their time at the setting. Therefore the practitioner has the responsibility of being proactive in building strong positive relations with the parent enabling the child to become more settled. It's important to not only make contact with the parent to discuss negative issues they need Informing daily or weekly about the successes that child has achieved. This will then help boost the child's self esteem. (Educationalappstore.com 2019)

The use of 'taster sessions' are a great way for practitioners to meet the child accompanied with their parent in the setting environment. These short sessions introduce them to the environment, to see the opportunities they will be provided with and get a chance to know the staff working in the settling. Parents having to 'hand their child over' to a practitioner can be extremely difficult for the them to deal with. Having met a number of the staff and a good idea of the routine, environment and the provision will make the transition run smoother.

It is well known that children have a strong attachment to their parent, they are their number one care giver and have been their constant security since being born. Being taken away from their parents and placed in a new setting where they are unfamiliar with can have serious implications on them and can cause separation anxiety. This is very common when starting a new setting and can often be felt by the child and the parent. The practitioner must use a variety of tactics to help ease this and encourage them to feel settled and safe. (mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk NO YEAR)

Bowlby identifies the different attachment stages and styles in children, stating that once the child has a secure 'clear cut attachment' they can develop separation anxiety when being left by their care giver. However when they are left in the new setting they are initially upset at their care givers absence but become reassured they will return resulting in the child settling and becoming eager to explore and engage with their new surroundings. (Learning-theories.com 2020)



(Quora.com 2018)

# Handbook guidance

This handbook is designed to help early years practitioners gain a full understanding of the transition process. Transition take place when a child moves from one setting to another or through the different classes as they travel through their education. The guidance is supported by theory and research based on transitions and will set out the expectations that should be met during this process. The practitioners role is to develop a transition programme that supports both the child and the parent. The programme should consist of different stages of the transition to help build up a full picture of the child's needs whilst reassuring the parent of the level of care that will be given. The main aim of the transition process is for the child to feel safe, secure and able to access the setting, environment and education to the best of their ability. (Kirklees council, NO YEAR)

The use of a 'Key worker' system gives the child a specific adult that they can build a strong bond with. The Key worker closely supports a small group of children of which they develop attachments with, they are able to identify the child's needs and are able to meet these in a sensitive caring way. Taking part in taster/ meet and greet sessions with the child and parent before they begin the new setting helps the child become familiar with the key worker. The parent is able to provide the key worker with facts about the child such as their likes and dislikes, family background and any developmental/ physical issues they have. (Foundation stage forum 2011)

Using this handbook the key worker/ practitioner will

- Understand the transition process
- Identify the child's needs
- Discover the importance of effective communication
- How to develop a partnership with the parent/ care giver
  - Create a planned approach for transition
  - Fully understand their role in the process

Each section of the handbook describes how these aims can be met in detail.

As Welsh Assembly Government (2019 pg.2 ) states 'Research suggests that quality early years care leads to improvements in children's development in later years, such as enhanced language skills; better educational performance in mathematics and reading; and a reduction in aggressive behaviour'.

The experiences early on in a child's life can impact on their future development and behaviour.

Harvard University, Center on the developing child (2002) supports this saying 'Just as a weak foundation compromises the quality and strength of a house, adverse experiences early in life can impair brain architecture, with negative effects lasting into adulthood.

With the guidance from this handbook practitioners will have the tools to planning a gradual transition which meets the child's needs and taking into consideration the parents involvement and both of their wellbeing.

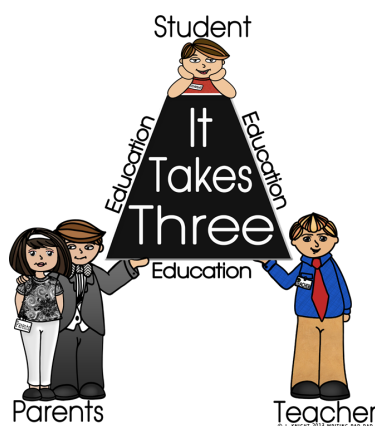


(Theconfidentteacher.com 2020)

# The role of the adult

The role of the early years practitioner is to make the child and their parent feel as comfortable as possible with the transition process. Working closely with the parents to support the child will ensure a smooth transition. This can be done by having the induction / taster sessions planned prior to their start date. Inviting the parent and child into the setting for short sessions where the child becomes familiar with the setting and parts of the routine, the parent gets a better understanding of the school ethos and becomes familiar with the practitioner and the practitioner is provided with vital background information about the child. Having this three way relationship gives a better understanding to all parties involved and can help better any issues or preconceptions about starting the new setting. This should generally happen over a couple of weeks in the summer term prior to starting the new school year. The parent should be provided with a detailed document about the start of the new setting. Information should include: start days and times, routine, the names and roles of the staff members.

(Department of education, NO YEAR)



(Clipartkey.com 2019)

To meet the needs of the child the practitioner must first understand how they develop, taking into consideration any barriers the child may be facing such as learning difficulties. The Foundation Phase Framework sets out the areas of learning that each child must have access to for them to meet their developmental potential. This involves the practitioner using the framework to plan and provide exciting and engaging opportunities to support their development. This holistic approach is fully inclusive taking into consideration the rights of the child.

(Welsh Assembly Government WAG 2015)

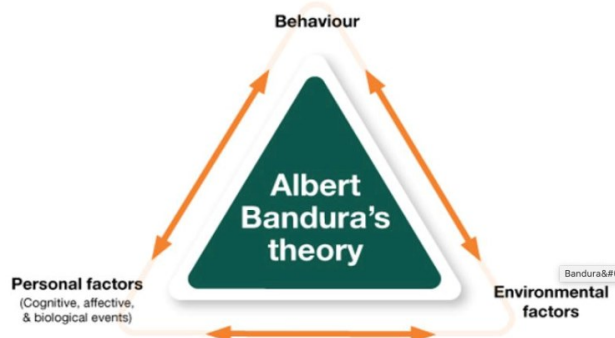
# The role of the adult

The practitioner as a key person- The practitioner needs to fully understand the role of a key person, it is not just about observing the child and greeting them on entrance to the setting, it is much deeper.

The Key person role is very closely linked to the attachment theory and having that specific adult assigned to the child gives the child a trusted adult in the setting. This is the adult that they have met and formed a relationship with during their induction sessions. It can help the child to feel comfortable as they are eased in with familiar adult and give them the security needed. The key person's role is also to help the child transition further on their next setting/ class when the time comes.

(Nurseryworld.co.uk 2019)

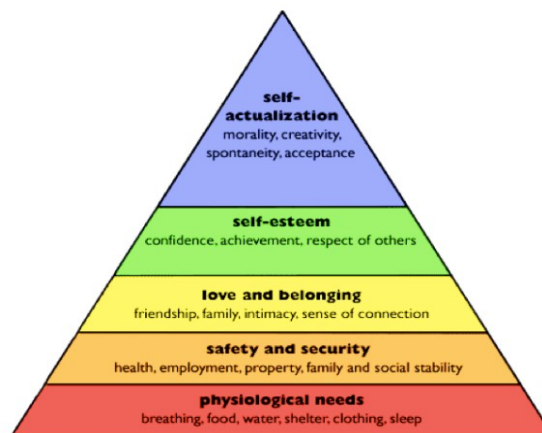
The key person acts as a role model to the child, displaying positive interactions with others and supporting the child's communication skills whilst doing this. They reinforce social skills when working in small groups to help the child build relationships with their peers and others during the settling in period. Bandura's social learning theory is based on how we learn from our interactions through observation, imitation and modelling. (Ravieh 2012) states that 'After observing the behavior of others, people assimilate and imitate that behavior, especially if their observational experiences are positive ones or include rewards related to the observed behavior.'



(educationaltechnology.net 2020)

The practitioner is responsible for environment provided within the setting. They must ensure that it is welcoming, safe and fully accessible to all the children. There should be opportunity for children to make independent choices about their learning journeys and as well as having playful experiences. The environment needs to be inviting and engaging whilst promoting curiosity. During the induction/ taster sessions there should be opportunities for the child and parent to explore the setting to help it become more familiar to them which will provide comfort when the child starts attending. (WAG 2015 pg3) supports this, stating 'Children learn through first-hand experiential activities with the serious business of 'play' providing the vehicle. Through their play, children practise and consolidate their learning, play with ideas, experiment, take risks, solve problems' Having the prior knowledge of the areas of learning and the child's needs/ abilities will support the practitioner in creating such an environment to help the child develop.

# The needs of the child



(stefeducation.wordpress.com 2015)

Before children can begin to take on learning within an educational setting it is vital that their basic needs are met. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (as shown above) is the proven theory of what we need to survive and thrive. If a child is not having their basic needs met, such as food, shelter, warmth and their health they will not be able to focus on learning. The brain goes into threat mode which causes the inability to concentrate and understand the

situation. (Howyoungchildrenlearn.com, NO YEAR)

It is the rights of the child to have the needs met as supported by the UN Convention of the rights of the child (UNCRC). Article 24 of the (UNCRC 1992) states that 'Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education... 'All children have the right to have these needs met regardless of their family background, race or religion. The

practitioner should work closely with outside agencies to support any children who are not having their basic needs met.

Building on the knowledge of the child passed on from the parent will help the practitioner have a better understanding of the child and their preferences. They can be proactive in causing any

distress to the child by settling them in gradually, focusing on the what the child likes and incorporating it into their learning. Having the activities set at the right level of challenge for child will further support development whilst taking their well-being into

consideration. 'The Reggio Emilia philosophy values the child as central to their own learning, not simply an empty vessel waiting to be filled with knowledge. '(tsc.nsw.edu.au 2017) This approach allows the child to be in charge of their own learning, based on their

preferences and desires supporting 'the child's voice'. It is important for children to have

Input into their learning journey as it can give them a boost of self-esteem and worth.

# The needs of the child

Play is an important factor of a child's development. It provides them with learning experiences led by them as well as adults that promotes physical, emotional and social development. The new Donaldson curriculum supports a more experiential way of learning with the curriculum being shaped around meeting the child's needs and allowing them to succeed with a responsibility for their own learning. (gov.wales 2018)

Friedrich Froebel supported this style of learning as he believed 'children as active, curious, creative learners who learn best through activity, play, talk, and self-reflection. They thrive when they are emotionally secure and in close relationships with others'. (Tovey, H. Pg1 NO YEAR)



(dreamstime.com NO YEAR)

The attachment theory was created by John Bowlby and it focuses on how a child reacts when they are separated from their care giver and how it can affect their development. (Wilson-Ali et al 2019) When children begin an educational setting, for them having to separate from their parent can be very distressing. The role of the key worker / practitioner is to build that bond and a trusting relationship with the child so the child can have their needs met when away from their parent. They need to have a trusted adult that they can look to for comfort and support and take over the role of the parent whilst in the setting. Having this secure relationship will help the child develop the confidence they need to access all areas of the curriculum, enabling them to reach their full potential. As mentioned previously, if a child does not have these needs met it can result in the brain having difficulties in understanding these emotions and can cause unwanted behaviours. With the practitioner/keyworker developing this trusted relationship they have a better insight into the child's reactions and needs through observation which will help them with the planning of activities for the child.

# Partnerships & Interventions



(Rentzke, J 2016)

When working with children it is crucial that all services work closely together to be aware of the child's needs and have a consistency approach in supporting the child. The child and parent form a relationship with the practitioner during transition, this is formed through the parent giving the practitioner background information on the child and when the child attends the setting the practitioner feeds back the child's day to the parent. Having this strong communication between both parties enable them to have a bigger picture and understanding of the child.

The practitioner also introduces the child and parent to any outside agencies that may be needed to support the child or family further. For outside agencies to work with the child the parent must give written permission.

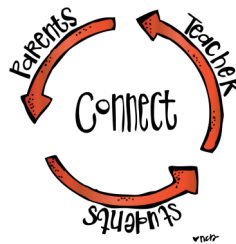
An example of some 'outside agencies' available are

- LEA—Local Education Authority
  - Social Services
  - Behavioural support
  - Educational Psychologist
  - Child Protection
- Speech and Language therapists (Drifte 2002)

During the child's first weeks in the new setting the practitioner will carry out a range of observations and assessments to gain an understanding of the child's level of development. This will include wellcomm, language links as well as baseline and Thrive. From these assessments the practitioner will be aware of any interventions or additional support the child will need. This can be carried out within the setting by the practitioner or by an outside agency depending on the level of need. Any concerns for child must be raised with their parent. They need to be fully informed of any additional support the child requires and made part of the process. Providing the parent with these details will help them have a full understanding of their child's needs and they can help reinforce any interventions at home with the support materials from the agencies. (belb.com 2011)

# Proposed outcomes

The proposed outcomes for the transition process is to ensure that the practitioner has a well planned approach for the child and parent when starting the new setting. The gradual process will help build a positive, trusting relationship between the child, parent and the practitioner.



(Clipartkey.com 2019)

The parent and child need to feel fully supported through the process whilst understanding it step by step. They will be provided with the emotional support needed to combat any issues which may arise due to the child's strong attachment to the parent.

'Research suggests that children's experiences can be enhanced when staff actively support children to 'fit in' and are aware of the impact of their practices on how

children and their parents become 'inducted' into a new environment.' (WAG P3 2017)

Developing the strong relations with the parent and the child gives the practitioner the greatest insight into the child. Being aware of the parents preferences and the background of the child should be at the forefront of the practitioners mind when planning their

transition process. With this they are able to plan a stimulating environment for the child which includes opportunities for independent learning as well as adult led learning and will help the child develop holistically. The practitioner will take into consideration the different learning styles whilst planning it. Working together with the parent, child and other agencies will give the child the

support needed to achieve their full potential regardless of any barriers that may arise.

With the child's and parents needs being met, the child is given the best possible start to transitioning to their new setting.

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