

Transitioning in the early years



Source: Dreamstime (2021)

A key Handbook for keyworkers

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Introduction

The Importance of transitioning

Common core skills (2010) believe that the term transition means a form of change, Examples of this could be a change of setting such as moving from home to nursery or changing from nursery to school. Discover my world (2019) talks about the transitioning period and believes that depending on how you go about approaching the transitioning stage will in turn show how well the child will learn and settle into the setting. They also state that as practitioners we are experienced in creating a smooth transition for the child which will allow them to form an attachment and bond. In relation to this, Erickson (2019 cited in Trodd 2014) talks about how the early years setting is commonly known as the first social environment a child will experience and discusses the benefits of smooth transitioning. He believes that by having a positive outcome from transitioning, there is a higher likelihood that children will continue to have positive experiences as they develop. Walker (2019) agrees with this and talks about how transitions are central to the child's development and well being and discusses how the way transitions are dealt with at that specific moment in time can result in how a child will deal with potential change in their future lives. She also believes that it's important for early year practitioners to support the child through the transitioning period because this will then likely result in it being a positive experience for them and will result in enhancing their development. Furthermore, she mentions the importance and duties that need to be fulfilled by a key worker in order to have a smooth transition.

Trodd (2014) talks about the need for the key worker to show responsibility during a child's transitioning experience. She talks about the importance of including the child's key carers into the process by finding out the child's specific needs and routine, this will encourage them to feel supported and comfortable when leaving their child in your care and will result in creating a smoother transition for the child which will then leave a positive impact on them. Additionally, The Novak Djokovic foundation (2016) states that transitions are something that are common and happen all the time but explains that the impact on the child's life depending on the transitions vary. They state that it is important for a child to

acknowledge change and believe that parents should also be aware of the change in a child's life whilst also noticing the child's behaviours in the specific situation.

The Needs of the child

The transitioning period is known as an exciting but also challenging experience in the early years. There are many parties involved in ensuring the child has a smooth transition into a setting. A few examples of the people involved in the transitioning process consist of;

- Key workers
- Managers
- Carers
- Children
- Community services
- The early years' service as a whole

(Kagan and Rigby (2003 cited in Elliot-Johns and Jarvis 2017)).

Freestone (2016) believes that a key worker needs to have a sense of empathy, patience and understanding. He also talks about how an effective key worker is someone who takes responsibility of the child and carer when joining a setting. This involves communicating effectively by forming bonds and relationships with carers and also paying attention and getting to know the child and carer. Toucan Learn (2021) States that during and after a child transitioning stage the key workers are known as the adults who perform observations and focus on the seven stages of development of the child and reports back to the parent.

The seven stages of development include Personal and Social Development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity, Language, Literacy and Communication skills, Mathematical Development, Welsh Language Development, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical Development and Creative Development. (National day nurseries association 2019)

Common core skills (2010) Discusses the individual needs of the child and the importance of putting them in the centre of the care you provide, this will have a positive impact on the child's overall development. They also talk about the importance of being honest and respectful as this allows a relationship to form which is known to have a positive effect to a Child's everyday life. Kirklees council (2019) Discusses the unique child and states that it's an essential requirement that key workers are aware of a child with additional learning needs and what level their current development is at so that they can adapt to their specific requirements in order for the child to feel comfortable and welcomed. They then go on to mention the unique child and discuss how this specific child will need a more thorough and planned transition, so that they are more likely to have a smoother transition into the early years setting. In addition to this, UNICEF (no date) talks about article 12 in the UNCRC and explains that all children have a voice and have the right to be listened to no matter what age or level of maturity they are at, this is in place as it allows all children's views to be taken seriously and respected.

Early Years Careers (2015) Discuss the importance of keeping the parent involved when their child is transitioning into the setting, they recommend things such as taking pictures to reassure and comfort the parent that their child is complacent, Updating parents daily on how they have been and allowing the parents to stay and play with their child during the settlement, this will then also encourage the child to feel comfortable and safe.

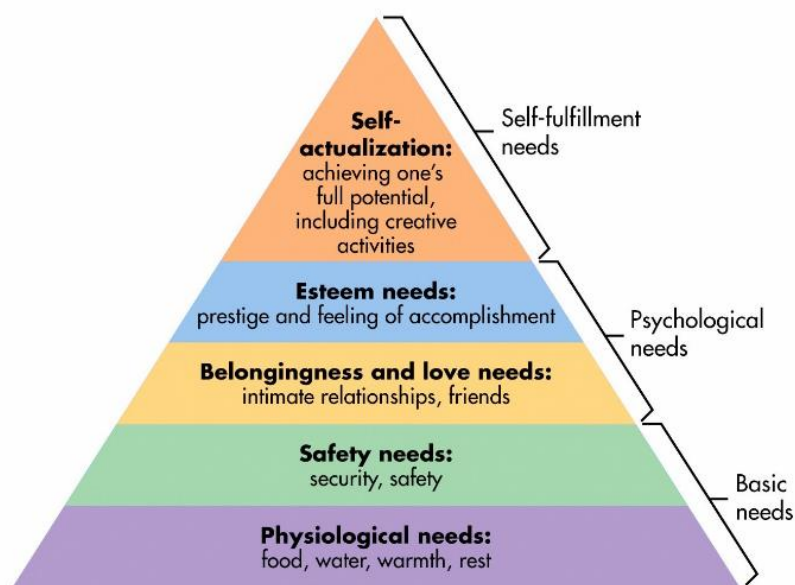
Transitions are classed as milestones for children and have a large impact on a child's development. Transitions are known as times of new experiences, opportunities and growth but can also be times of uncertainty as the environment is not the same for the child in comparison to what they are used to because the procedures and expectation levels are different. It is important for practitioners to get this specific transition right. (early years matters, 2021)

The educator UK (2017) States that key workers need to create and develop on procedures to ensure a child has a positive experience and smooth transition into a setting and believes that key workers should:

- Encourage children to bring in something comforting to them

- Review how any child is settling in on a daily basis in order to notice if there are any changes that need to be made
- Highlight and discuss to other staff members about any children that may be vulnerable or need any extra requirements

Maslow's hierarchy of needs



(Source: Ferris 2015)

Ferris (2015) shows Maslow's hierarchy of needs which was originated in 1977. Maslow's theory focuses on the needs of the child. The hierarchy triangle has three sections in relation to the child's needs, starting with the lowest form, which is basic needs, this is in place to ensure the child's safety and physiological needs are met. The second stage of the triangle is called the psychological needs which involves the love and self esteem needs of the child which is supported by gaining relationships and feeling valued. The highest section of the triangle is self fulfilment needs which is achieved when all the lower areas of needs are met and encouraged, this is where a child will reach their highest potential and excel in their experiences, as a practitioner it is encouraged that you aim for the child to reach the top of the hierarchy triangle as quickly as possible when transitioning.

The Role of the adult and partnerships

Walker (2019) believes that transitioning is an emotional and nervous time for parents and children, she talks about how practitioners should manage this by being sensitive and affective, Transitioning should be a positive experience for everyone involved and effective communication is important when working in partnership as it allows you to gain trust and respect, this will then support smooth transitioning. (Kagan and Rigby (2003 cited in Elliot-Johns and Jarvis 2017). Walker (2019) In addition to this, Dunlop and Fabian (2006) Discuss the benefits of working in partnership and promoting positive outcomes when transitioning. They believe that by being inclusive and diverse in your setting it shows respect to the community around you. Bennett (no date) believes when aiming to make a difference to young people's lives, you need to work closely with parents. she states that when working in partnerships with carers you need to have a specific skill in order to work effectively alongside them. Common core skills (2010) state that by having the ability to accommodate a child's everyday routine and accepting the reassurance and support the child and parent need, you are able to work in partnership and communicate effectively, this will benefit the child's physical, emotional and intellectual development. Additionally, Dunlop and Fabian (2006) also highlight the importance of working efficiently with parents/carers and talk about needing to have the ability to share goals, routine, and values with them which will then in turn support the transitioner.

Scottish curriculum has the five C, s these are:

1. Consistency
2. Communication
3. Collaboration
4. Culture
5. child centre

The Scottish government (2011) discuss the curriculum for excellence and believe that an efficient transition should promote progression in the child's learning experiences and state that practitioners, parents and other supporting agencies should work together to ensure the child's progression is positive and that the child's wellbeing needs are being met. They also state that parents have a key significance in supporting their child's learning so it is important that key workers involve parents to understand how the child is learning and settling into the new environment, key workers could do this by showing children's learning goals and targets to show parents the children's progress and achievements. In addition to this, DFES (1990) agree with the significance of parents to the child and state that parents are the children's first educators so it's important to involve the parents into the children's early years experiences. Kirklees council (2013) discuss how key workers should be professional and reassuring in order for parents to feel able to approach staff if they have any questions to ask, feel involved and included and feel like they are in a partnership with the setting.

Secure relationships with the key worker

Scharer (2018) discusses Bowlby attachment theory (1969). Bowlby's Attachment theory talks about how all children need a stable and secure relationship with at least one carer for a healthy socioemotional development to occur. In addition to this, Schafer (2018) believes that for early year practitioners, welcoming a child is very common although it is also known as an unpredictable experience as each child reacts differently to their own transitions and have different personal needs when moving into a new environment.

Goosens and IJzendoorn (1990) mentioned that the key worker will tend to have children in their care that are securely attached to them as they will have formed a bond with them, this links back to Bowlby's theory of attachment as by having a secure bond with at least one carer in their lives, the child will feel secure and safe, this attachment in the transitioning stage is usually the key worker. Schafer (2018) talks about an observation in a primary setting and also looks at the transitioning of the child and the role of the adult, she talks about the child having a selected care giver that puts them in the centre to gain a positive experience before eventually introducing them to other practitioners which will allow them to continue forming secure attachments with others.

The importance of a nurturing environment

Trodd (2014) discusses the importance of having a nurturing environment for the children to settle into. She advises to make the setting as comfortable and homely as possible.

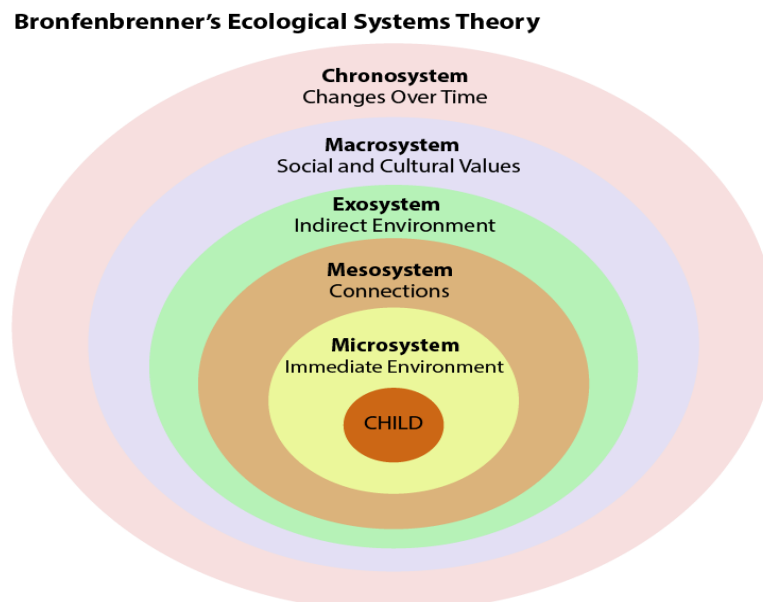
Additionally, the foundation phase (2008) talks about the importance of children having stimulating experiences and that the environment in the setting should be well organised to allow the child to feel comfortable in their environment.

Welsh government (2021) discusses enabling pathways and the importance of a secure and enabling environment. They believe that the environment, involving inside and outside of the setting, should be central to children's outcomes and discuss that exploring the environment is a key component for enhancing the child's development and believes that by exploring their surroundings a sense of belonging will form. They also talk about practitioners needing to consider the physical space as well as the emotional environment that support children in order for them to reach their full potential. By having an inclusive and diverse environment it will allow children to expand on their physical, creative and imaginative development.

Welsh government (2021) believe that an inclusive environment should allow the child to experience a sense of curiosity this could be about the living climate around them which will motivate them to explore and solve problems which will encourage the child's creativity skills and talk about how the environment should also provide space and opportunities for the children to develop physically, this will improve aspects of their development such as their gross and fine motor skills.

Exploring your mind (2020) Discusses Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory that was created in 1979 and explains that it is about how social environments affect the child's development. Bronfenbrenner (1979) believed that the environment you grow up in affects every part of your life. He also believed that it determines the way you think as well as your emotions and your likes and dislikes. Bronfenbrenner decided to create the five systems that the child is in contact with which influences the child's life as they grow up, his theory places the child in the centre and includes the environments that surround the child. The

five systems are the Microsystem which is direct contact (usually caregivers), mesosystem which is also direct contact (commonly teachers and schools), the exosystem which is known as indirect contact (usually a parent's work colleagues), the macrosystem which is known as the cultural beliefs of the child and finally, chronosystem which was added onto the ecological theory later in Bronfenbrenner's life (known as a death to a loved one).



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Source: the psychology notes HQ (2017)

Interventions

Play

An effective strategy of smooth transitioning for the child is play. A meaning of play is known as freely chosen and child initiated that's actively engaging. (National Playing Fields Association 2000). Opportunities towards play is important towards children's mental and physical health and are beneficial for their education. (Taylor and Francis 2008). in addition to this, Welsh government (2008) states that all children should experiment, take risks, make decisions and problem solve through play.

Tovey(2017) talks about Froebel's gifts and discusses how Froebel believed in a natural environment and the significance of play. She discusses how Froebel believed that play was part of being human and alive as the child is fully active and motivated when moving. Froebel also argued that play allows the child to relate to their feelings and experiences and believed that play was important as it allows children to reflect, develop awareness and determination.

Murray (2018) discusses how play is dynamic and educated early years practitioners who are confident in knowing their groups of children are in a strong position to understand that play is to the child and allows the practitioner to communicate its importance to others. The practitioner is also known to be able to understand young children's motivations through their play which has a positive effect on the child's social development. In relation to this, it is known that children in the twenty first century now have less opportunities for child-initiated play in comparison to previous years which has been known to cause an increase in obesity, brain and psychological development of the child. (Burdette and Whitaker 2005). By playing with and alongside children, it is known to help the child have a positive and smooth transition into our care.

Solving for Parents

Name of Child _____ Date Received _____

Does your child have a pacifier? If so, what brand have been used? _____

Does your child have a blanket, teddy bear, or other comfort object? _____

Does your child have a favourite toy? _____

Does your child have a favourite song? _____

Does your child have a favourite food? _____

Does your child have a favourite drink? _____

Does your child have a favourite colour? _____

Does your child have a favourite animal? _____

Does your child have a favourite book? _____

Does your child have a favourite game? _____

Does your child have a favourite activity? _____

Does your child have a favourite place? _____

Does your child have a favourite person? _____

Does your child have a favourite thing? _____

Does your child have a favourite sound? _____

Does your child have a favourite smell? _____

Does your child have a favourite taste? _____

Does your child have a favourite texture? _____

Does your child have a favourite shape? _____

Does your child have a favourite size? _____

Does your child have a favourite number? _____

Does your child have a favourite letter? _____

Does your child have a favourite word? _____

Does your child have a favourite sentence? _____

Does your child have a favourite phrase? _____

Does your child have a favourite expression? _____

Does your child have a favourite gesture? _____

Does your child have a favourite movement? _____

Does your child have a favourite sound effect? _____

Does your child have a favourite music genre? _____

Does your child have a favourite artist? _____

Does your child have a favourite band? _____

Does your child have a favourite movie? _____

Does your child have a favourite TV show? _____

Does your child have a favourite book series? _____

Does your child have a favourite game series? _____

Does your child have a favourite sport? _____

Does your child have a favourite team? _____

Does your child have a favourite player? _____

Does your child have a favourite coach? _____

Does your child have a favourite referee? _____

Does your child have a favourite commentator? _____

Does your child have a favourite commentator? _____

Does your child have a favourite commentator? _____

Does your child have a favourite commentator? _____

(Source: Swansea university student union day nursery)

Swansea university student union day nursery (no date) States the questions that they ask a babies parent when they are transitioning into a nursery setting. A few examples of the questions consist of:

- If the child needs milk
- If the child sleeps
- If the child is able to use their wipes

And many other health related questions.

When thinking about Maslows hieracchy of needs, it is useful to consider asking questions like what the child is interested in and what does the child enjoy playing with. These question will give you the ability to form attachments and allow the children to heighten their self esteem which will then go on to encourage them to reach self fulfilment quicker when transitioning into a setting.

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