

A decorative border of blue and pink handprints surrounds the central text. The handprints are arranged in a repeating pattern along the top, bottom, and sides of the page.

The importance of transition in early years handbook



Source: (Freepik, no date)

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Introduction- Transitions

Aim:

The aim of this handbook is to support early years practitioners in transitioning children. The handbook is separated into sections, to cover the importance of transition and the roles within it. The focus of this handbook is the transition from Nursery to Reception in Primary school. The essential information can be applied to many different transitions.

What is a transition?

Cambridge dictionary (1995) defines 'Transition' as "a change from one form or type to another, or the process by which this happens".

Children experience many transitions during the early years of their life. Transitioning from nursery to reception is a big milestone for children aged 4-5, they will be faced with new challenges and experiences. As well as longer periods of time spent within the school setting. Children's emotions will vary through transitions depending on the individual and the experience.

The role of the adult

During the transition of a child the role of the adult is crucial. The adult must ensure the child is cared for and supported during this experience. The role of the adults in a setting determine the experience a child will have, the child should feel secure, welcomed and happy in the setting. By having qualified practitioners who know how to care for children, making them feel safe and loved is fundamental to aiding children's development.

The role of the adult as an early years' practitioner is to study a child's development. When doing so a child must be looked at with not only their immediate environment, but as well the larger environments interactions with the child.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological system is based upon the arrangement of structures of a child's environment. They are arranged in the order of the amount of impact they have on a child (Guy-Evans, 2020).

The ecological systems theory's microsystem is its most significant aspect. This is the child's immediate surroundings, which includes places like family and school.

When observing a child's development the ecological theory system can be used in practice to ensure all aspects of the child's development are included.

The role of the adult

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

The Microsystem:

This is the first level in a child's immediate environment including direct contact with a child, such as parents, siblings, teachers and school peers.

The Mesosystem:

The interactions between the child's microsystems, such as those between parents and teachers or between classmates and siblings, are included in the mesosystem.

For example, interaction between a child's parents and teachers may affect the development of the child. A mesosystem is essentially a system of microsystems.

According to the ecological systems theory, a child's development should be positively impacted by their parents and teachers getting along and having a good relationship as opposed to negatively affected if they do not.- See 'Partnerships for further.

The Exosystem:

This includes other formal and informal social systems that don't directly contain children but have an impact on one of the microsystems indirectly.

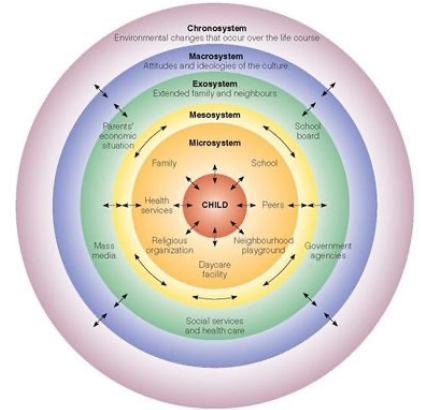
The Macrosystem:

The Macrosystem, a part of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, is focused on the ways in which socioeconomic status, wealth, poverty, and ethnicity, among other cultural factors, influence a child's development.

A child growing up in a third-world area might, for example, experience different development than a child growing up in a wealthy one.

The Chronosystem:

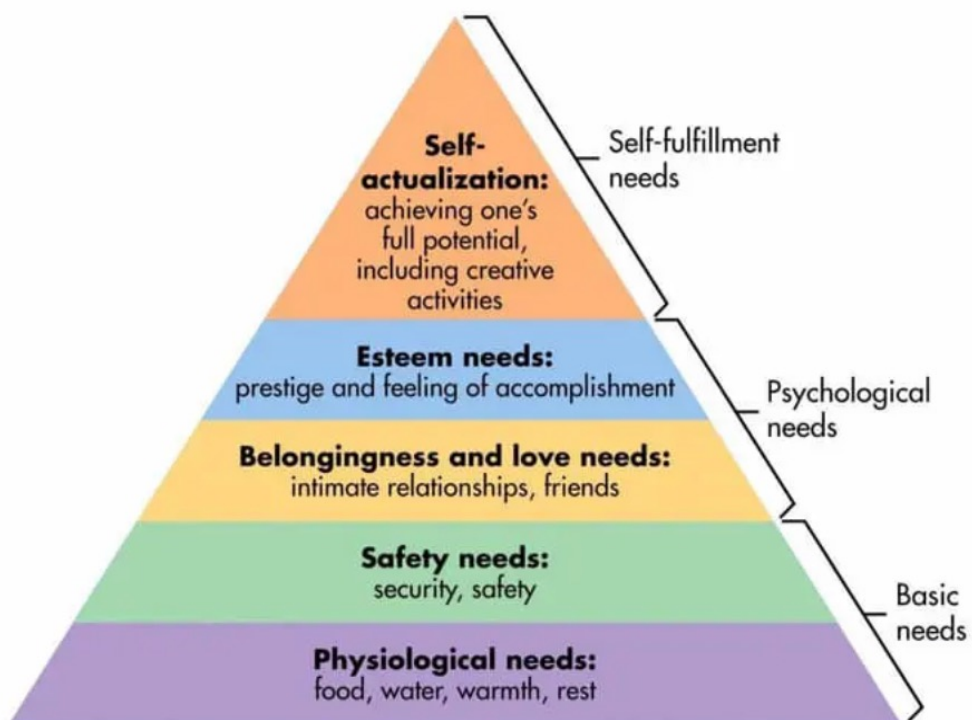
This system includes all of the significant life transitions and historical events that occur over the course of a child's lifetime and have an impact on development.



Source: (Guy-Evans, 2020)

The needs of the child

The focus must be on getting to know the child, their likes and dislikes, how they think, and what their interests are in order to enable us as practitioners to care for a child in our class states Dowling (2014).



(Source: Help children live better, 2022)

Maslows hierarchy of needs- a model that represents a person's basic human requirements. Prior to meeting the demands higher up on the triangle, the needs at the bottom must be satisfied. This can be applied when focusing on the needs of a child during their transition, if the child does not feel as though their basic needs are being met they will be unable to meet their needs further up the triangle.

Physiological- access to water, snack

Safety- having a safe environment to play in

Belonginess- relationship with teacher, making friends

Esteem- being praised

The needs of the child

The needs of the child are fundamental during child development while transitioning.

The strength of a young child's primary relation with his or her parents does not interfere with close relationships with other loving and consistently accessible people. In contrast, young children's social and emotional development might be benefited by having various carers states Havard University (2016). This suggests by a teacher providing for and caring for a child they will be able to create a relationship in which will benefit the child.

As well as this Early influences also have a significant impact on the areas of the brain responsible for higher-order processes, which include the majority of social, emotional, and cognitive abilities, including several aspects of executive functioning. This is important as we must continue to let children develop through reception.

Following Bowlby's attachment theory, it is important for the teachers to build secure attachments with the children, this will allow them to be easily comforted until their parents return.

Another theory to be considered in the school setting is Erikson's psychosocial development. 'Initiative vs guilt' Around this age, children begin to acquire knowledge about social roles and standards. At this period, their imagination will flourish and they are likely to keep up the resistance and tantrums from the previous stage. The manner in which the child is treated by trusted adults will either inspire him or her to behave autonomously or cause him or her to feel guilty about any inappropriate acts. This reflects the importance of a child needing to trust an adult to develop. (Wells, Sueskind, & Alcamo, 2017).

Partnerships

Practitioner and Parent/ Carer relationships:

Positive transitions are built on strong, respectful relationships between parents and practitioners (Patel, 2000).

As an early years practitioner creating a positive bond with parents/carers is important as the parent can provide the setting/practitioner with information of the child to make the transition as smooth as possible. For example, knowing the child's likes and dislikes, how they can be settled, how they react to change can all be helpful to the practitioners in creating a safe bond with the child.

Patel (2000) also states that parents find comfort by forming relationships with practitioners who care for their child, while children are reassured when witnessing conversation between these significant adults in their life.

According to the ecological systems theory, a child's development should be positively impacted by their parents and teachers getting along and having a good relationship as opposed to negatively affected if they do not, states Guy-evans (2020) – early years practitioners play a vital role in this part of the ecological system. The practitioner should build a relationship with families/carers of the children in the setting and allowing the children to see this happening.

Positive parent-school interactions are necessary for a smooth transfer. According to Epstein, two fundamental conflicting ideas of home-school connections are illustrated by the diverse philosophies and beliefs of teachers. One emphasises the "inherent conflict, rivalry, and incompatibility between families and schools and advocates their separation, while "the other emphasises the "coordination, collaboration, and cooperation between the two." states Bateson (2013)

Partnerships

Teaching staff relationships:

A positive relationship between nursery and reception teachers is important to pass on background information on the children as well as discussing their current developments. Planning handovers between professionals is essential to guaranteeing that children's needs are satisfied and that new attachments are strengthened states Patel (2000).

Multi agency relationships:

Working with multi agency is also crucial when aiding a child to develop. If a child has a history of social services involvements the new teacher will need to be informed.

Interventions

Interventions are put in place to aid children and parents through the transition from nursery to reception.

Welcome pack:

When the child begins reception a welcome pack should be created by teaching staff to hand out to parents/ carers. The welcome pack can include information such as: school start and finish time, the daily/ weekly routine, what the child should expect. As well as all necessary forms to be filled out by the parent/carer.

Settling in sessions:

In the weeks leading up to children leaving nursery to join reception, the children will be brought in small groups during the day to join in with the current reception class to experience the classroom with an adult from their nursery class, by doing this they are having the experience of their new classroom but still having a familiar adult supporting them. This supports the child's transition as when they begin reception they are familiar with the environment and therefore feel safe and secure there, resulting in them feeling less nervous in September.

Phased start

In primary schools as Nursery classes are half day, joining Reception is a significant transition for young children. To support children during this transition, phased starts are beneficial. Children are less distressed with a phased start as the jump from Nursery to reception is not as drastic. Phased starts could be set up as the following:

Week One: 11:30

Week two: 12:30 (dinner in school)

Week three: 1:30

Week four: 2:30

Week five: 3:30 – phased start completed.

Proposed outcomes

A child's successful transition will be evident when the child is settled, feels safe and is progressing within the new transition. The child will begin progressing in the new environment while being comfortable doing so. They will be able to independently play while developing relationships with their peers and new teachers. They will continue to develop their social skills as well as they will develop academically while in reception learning basics in all areas of the curriculum.

Through observations, the teacher will be able to meet the child's needs and create chances for the development of following steps.

The child will have settled into the classroom with new peers and teachers.

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