

## 2.6 Effective Transition



**‘High quality transitions recognise the importance of feeling “known”.** Key to a high-quality experience for all children in the early years is ensuring continuity between home. Key people and all the settings that make up children’s individual learning journeys. In today’s society children may have many out of home experiences through childcare, toddler groups, family day care and more than one nursery, and they will appear to straddle change with ease. But while transitions may occur with great frequency, not all children navigate these comfortably or happily’. (Birth to 5 Matters – Foundations of highest quality provision).

[Birth To 5 Matters – Guidance by the sector, for the sector](#)

### What do we mean by transition?

Transitions are milestone events in children's lives and can have a significant impact on their learning, development and wellbeing, so it is vitally important we get this right for our children. Transition is a process that involves the child as well as the family and practitioners. It is a period of change that can be both challenging and exciting but needs to be well managed and planned. Transition is any period of change, both large and small that a child may experience. This could be the change from home to an early years setting. It could also be movement within a setting such as moving between rooms. It could be transitions during the day such as from inside to outside, story time to activity time. Starting school is a major transition for children and their families.

Children with SEND are more vulnerable to experiencing a difficult transition if effective protective factors are not in place. Transition that is carefully planned can make a significant difference to a child’s future success; if transition is a positive experience, a successful transition is more likely to occur at each transition point as the child learns how to adapt to change in different environments.

“The greatest inhibitor to attainment in schools is children’s self-confidence and level of anxiety. When children feel comfortable and ‘at home’ in their environment they are far more likely to succeed. When they are subjected to significant change, it can take many children a long time to adjust to their new situation”

Alistair Bryce-Clegg.

## **The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals**

### **Transitions to another setting:**

Whilst children may stay settled within a particular setting through their Nursery and Pre-School years, sometimes there may be a need to move to another location, or change settings.

When this happens it is helpful to share information between the settings, to support a smooth transition and to share important information or any supporting documents, for children with identified additional needs.

Parents should be informed of any documents that are shared, and consent to share should be obtained beforehand.

Assessments, support plans, any information that has been shared by the family with you, all of this is helpful to support a child into a new placement.

It might be helpful for the family to visit the setting with the child, during a quieter part of the day, and to be introduced to their new key person. This relationship is an important part of helping to support a child through a transition to a new environment.

Staggered arrival times can help, to reduce anxiety, and this can be planned with the parent.

Occasionally some children might attend two settings, particularly a Pre-school and childminder, shared care. It is also important to share information and any planning between settings where possible.

## **The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals**

### **Transitions within a Setting**

As children progress through their Early Years education they may move from baby room, to toddler room, to preschool space. The ratios of staff to children will change as the children grow up, allowing for more staffing in the younger rooms.

Each child is allocated a Key Person.

This person is a supportive role for the parent, where information can be shared between the family and the setting. The Key Person may complete assessments on your child's development and share any achievements and also any concerns they may have.

Each setting will allocate this role within their own staffing.

A key person role is valuable during transitions within settings.

When children move from one age group to another they may need additional support to adjust to the new routine and expectations. The Key Person can support this by visiting the new area with the child, introducing the new staff members and children to the individual child. A shared play time, story time or small group activity alongside a familiar staff member, can help to adjust to the new play area and people.

Staff should be aware of each individual child's wellbeing and the level of support needed during transitions and changes within a setting. If staff are able to it can be comforting to the child to still see and interact with previous staff members and peers, over a garden space, and shared communal areas within the setting.

Keeping resources familiar across age ranges within a setting can be reassuring to children. Familiar visual aids, signs and props, across different rooms, can bring comfort and reassurance to children when they are settling somewhere new.

## **The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals**

### **Transitions to School**

Parents play an important role in supporting their child during their transition to school. It is a new chapter for the family. What can parents do to help the process?

- Take walks past the school.
- Buy the uniform early and wash it and have it around the house, practice putting it on and wearing it. It will become familiar and not new on the first day of school.
- Be open and honest about worries you have for your child starting school.
- Discuss what strategies you use at home and how they work.
- Ask who the SENDCo is at the school.
- Agree a date to discuss how transition to school is going with teacher.

Transitions to Primary school vary between schools. Once your child has been offered a primary school place and you have accepted the place the school will contact you to inform you of the transition process they have planned.

This may involve visits with parents, story times, shared lunches, and even home visits during the first few weeks of the academic year.

Sometimes children may require additional support during transition to school. There may be identified additional needs to consider planning for, a medical care plan to share, or additional information individual to a child that would be helpful to share.

When this occurs the Early Years setting will plan a “Supported Transition”.

Things to consider:

- Think about writing a transition plan with the parent and school.
- Plan supported visits over a period of time. Starting with a short visit without the children in the classroom. Take photos on the child’s visit and make them into a transition to school book.
- Ask the teacher to visit the setting.
- Know your child... use the ‘all about me’ sheet (templates on the VLE) to collate and update information on your child for example, what I need help with.
- Key person... Recognise the importance of your role in supporting the transition of you.

## **The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals**

- Paperwork ... A transitional plan, a child profile, a passport book, an all about me sheet, a photo book of school, visual aids/timetables all support the child with a smooth transition into school.
- Remember to put clear and concise wording on the paperwork so that the child's needs, strengths, strategies and what works well is easily understood by practitioners.
- Communication... how does your child communicate? This could be through Makaton signs, visual routines or cue cards or social stories.
- It is the key person role to collate the information on the child's communication and share this with the school.
- Parents... the transition is the start of the child and their parents new school life. Making this a success with the parents' involvement will help them to form new relationships with school.
- Settings can plan a supported transition meeting for children with identified additional needs. Inviting any relevant professionals that may have been involved can be helpful. Maybe the child has been supported by Speech and Language Therapy, or has been seen by a Paediatrician.
- Support parent to discuss their worries about child starting school. Have some of the supported transition documentation completed for the meeting, add any other actions from the meeting.
- Plan a review date for parent and school on the supported transition paperwork.
- Create an All about me or communication passport about the child to pass on to school.
- Pass on information about likes and dislikes and interests. Have examples of visuals you are using to hand for staff at school to see when they visit. Pass on information on what strategies you are using to support the child.

The Early Years Team has designated Early Intervention Officers and Advisory that can support transitions to school, and follow the child into their Reception year.

The Early Years setting can contact them for advice and support.

Priority 5 of [South Gloucestershire's Strategy for Children and Young People 0-25 with SEND 2018-2023](#) is 'Plan ahead for smooth transitions'. In relation to schools and settings, one of the key themes is:

- 5a) Develop a smooth transfer arrangement for children with SEND moving from early years settings to primary education.

## **What is effective transition best practice from early years to primary school?**

Good practice includes the earliest possible contact to share information which will support smooth transitions for all children - schools contacting settings and families and vice versa.

- Every child IS unique. Some children, including those with SEND may need additional support. This support will differ for each child and their family. Families should be offered a visit to their new school to meet the class teacher and the SENCo. These visits can be when no other children are present so it is a quiet time for the child to explore the new environment at their pace.
- Many schools will also offer a home visit. Fostering positive and trusting relationships with parents/carers (see section 1.7 - 1.9) is key to making a successful and positive transition.
- Adults need to plan for change and spend time preparing the child for the changes that are to take place. If a child understands what is going to happen, they are more likely to experience a successful transition.
- If a child is known to the Early Years Team a Team around the Child meeting will be arranged so the setting, school, parents and Early Years Officers can plan the next steps to support transition for the child into the next stage of their education. For example, a child may respond to specific visual aids in their setting and these need to be shared with the school to provide consistency. Paperwork ... A transitional plan, a child profile, a passport book, an all about me sheet, a photo book of school, visual aids/timetables all support the child with a smooth transition into school.
- Remember to put clear and concise wording on the paperwork so that the child's needs, strengths, strategies and what works well is easily understood by practitioners.
- Communication... how does your child communicate? This could be through Makaton signs, visual routines or cue cards or social stories.
- It is the key person role to collate the information on the child's communication and share this with the school.
- Parents... the transition is the start of the child and their parents new school life. Making this a success with the parents' involvement will help them to form new relationships with school.

## **The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals**

- Support parent to discuss their worries about child starting school. Have some of the supported transition documentation completed for the meeting, add any other actions from the meeting.
- Plan a review date for parent and school on the supported transition paperwork.
- Create an 'one page profile' or communication passport about the child to pass on to school.
- Pass on information about likes and dislikes and interests. Have examples of visuals you are using to hand for staff at school to see when they visit. Pass on information on what strategies you are using to support the child.
- 

The Early Years Team has designated Early Intervention Officers and Advisory that can support transitions to school, and follow the child into their Reception year.

The Early Years setting can contact them for advice and support.

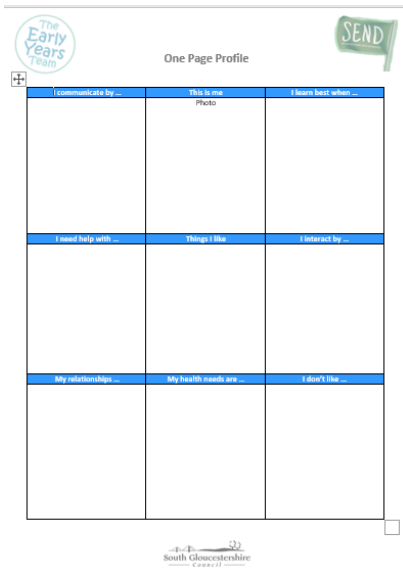
School staff can find out how the setting staff use the visuals with the child and what language do they use to support this?



### **South Glos Parents/carers say that the following are helpful:**

- 'All about me' or 'One Page Profile' documents that are written with parents and settings. These enable key information to be shared between settings.
- 'All about my new school' written by school staff with photos of key staff, classroom, outside areas, food area etc.
- For some children an extended transition period is helpful. This often includes short visits to their new setting throughout Term 5 and 6.
- A social story transition book which could explain specific areas of concern for the child.

# The South Glos Way: A SEND and inclusion toolkit for South Gloucestershire education settings and professionals



The Early Years Team logo and a green 'SEND' speech bubble are at the top right. The form is titled 'One Page Profile' and contains a 3x3 grid of boxes for information. The headers for the columns are: 'I communicate by...', 'This is me (Photo)', and 'I learn best when...'. The headers for the rows are: 'I need help with...', 'Things I like', and 'I interest by...'. The bottom row headers are: 'My relationships...', 'My health needs are...', and 'I don't like...'. The South Gloucestershire Council logo is at the bottom center.

I communicate by...	This is me (Photo)	I learn best when...



## Further advice and guidance

The Early Years' Service provide settings with guidance transition documents which they may, if they wish, complete with parents and share with the next setting. Parental permission is required to share these.

There is a general form for all children and a Supported Transition form so more detailed advice can be shared for any child with SEND and an action plan agreed for next steps.

Settings can contact the Early Years' Service and request support in managing any transitions.

Supported transition documents are available on the VLE