

**Bi-Borough Childcare and Early Education Service
Brilliant Beginnings for All Children**

Early Years Transition Toolkit

To be used in conjunction with:

[Getting Ready for Reception:](#)

**[How schools and early years settings can work together
with families to support transition into reception.](#)**

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Introduction

This toolkit can be used as a guide to support transition practice and to inform your setting and school's policies and procedures. It contains practical information and advice to share with staff, display in staff areas and use as part of induction for new team members.

The guidance and tools within this toolkit are designed to support reflective and responsive transition practice. Practitioners should use professional judgement to select, adapt and revisit approaches based on the needs of children and families.

This toolkit has been developed to support early years professionals across the Bi-borough to work in consistent, inclusive ways, while remaining flexible to local context and individual children.

It aims to support all children to experience smooth, successful and individualised transitions throughout the early years and beyond.



Defining Transition

Transition:

- Is a significant experience for all children, especially the most vulnerable.
- Is a long-term process that supports learning and development.
- Is not a one-off event, but a recurrent aspect in a child's life.
- It happens frequently, in most cases daily.



Transition involves:

- Leaving something behind (a place, person, friends, a role, an identity - a comfort zone).
- Encountering something unknown (places, people, new roles, new routines, new expectations).

Transitions in this booklet refer to a child starting at an early years setting, ending nursery and starting Reception or moving from the Foundation year into Key Stage 1.

Underpinning Principles

The principle of well-planned transitions and working with parents/carers to ensure that children's needs are met appropriately is embedded within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Transition should be viewed as a process rather than a single event and children, professionals and parents should be involved in this with the aim to plan effectively and align expectations to create a consistent approach so all children can enjoy a smoother transition. Children can then feel confident, settle quickly and engage positively with learning.

A unique child – every child is different and some will need more support than others to make successful transitions.



Recognise that all children can be vulnerable at times of change, particularly those with additional needs e.g. Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) or a child in care.

Positive relationships – The process of adults working together contributes to smoother transitions and ensures that parents/carers and professionals understand the specific impact transition will have on a child.



Enabling environments – Children cope better when conditions and routines are similar, and the process of change takes place gradually over time. The emotions that come with change can be successfully handled by children when their new setting/school has a welcoming, positive atmosphere with clear and consistent processes for supporting settling in.



All children learn in different ways and at different rates.

Involving Parents and Carers in the Transition Process

Parents and carers are their child's most important people. They know their child best and bring invaluable insights that support a smooth, inclusive transition. Transition is most effective when settings and families develop a shared understanding and work in strong partnership from an early stage.



It is essential to build knowledge about each child's ethnicity, language(s) and dialect, family experiences, community and locality. This understanding supports belonging, helps children settle more easily and enables practitioners to respond sensitively to each child's identity.

Starting a new setting can be an emotional and uncertain time for families. Creating a warm, inclusive and welcoming environment helps children feel safe and reassures families, building trust and confidence.

What matters most to parents and carers during transition is knowing that the setting will:



- keep their child safe, nurtured and emotionally secure
- value their lived experiences and knowledge of their own child
- respect and celebrate their child's cultural background and identity
- respond and adapt to their child's individual needs, particularly where a child has SEND or emerging needs
- take time to get to know their child and respond to their uniqueness
- provide a named key person who spends daily, meaningful time with both the child and their family, building strong, trusting relationships



Children who attend more than one setting

Where children attend more than one setting, all practitioners should work together with families and schools to create consistency and continuity in the child's experience.

Guidelines for good practice

Effective transition practice is planned, caring and flexible. Transition is a long-term process that starts early and continues into the child's reception year.

Children respond to change in different ways. All children are supported best when transitions happen slowly and with familiar, trusted adults.

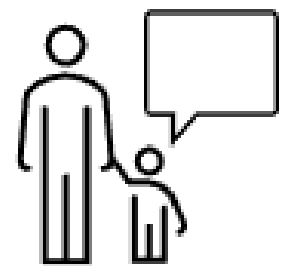
Good practice in supporting transition includes the following approaches:

The voice of the child and the family

Children should be supported to share how they feel in ways they understand. Parents and carers are partners and their knowledge of their child is valued.

This may be represented through:

- Play-based activities, observations and conversations
- Reading books about starting school
- Adding school uniform to the home corner
- Transition books, photographs or drawings of the new environment
- Regular two-way communication with families
- Meetings for parents to share what matters to them and their child



Early planning and relationship-based practice

Transition planning should start in the term before they are due to start and be part of everyday practice.

This may be represented through:

- Early conversations with families
- Visit to a new environment, if needed
- Gradual changes to routines
- A consistent key person
- Time for children to get to know new adults or places



Clear communication, policies and processes

Clear communication and shared processes help transitions run smoothly. Policies support consistent practice and help keep children safe.



This may be represented through:

- Clear transition policies and procedures
- Newsletters, messages or noticeboards
- Information sessions or coffee mornings
- Simple explanations of what will happen next

Safeguarding and wellbeing

Transition can be a worrying time for some children and families. Safeguarding and wellbeing must always come first.

This may be represented through:

- Adults who know children well
- Staff following safeguarding procedures
- Noticing changes in behaviour or attendance
- Quick action when concerns arise



Partnership working across settings

Working together helps children feel secure and settled. Sharing information supports continuity and inclusion.

This may be represented through:

- Regular contact between settings and schools
- Sharing transition information
- Joint planning or meetings
- Shared understanding of children's strengths, interests, communication and language development, friends and social interactions and support already in place.



Home visits and reciprocal visits

Visits help children and families feel familiar and relaxed. They also help adults build relationships.

This may be represented through:

- Home visits
- School staff visiting children in their current setting
- Supported visits to new settings
- Time to talk informally with families



Flexible, responsive support

Children settle in different ways and at different speeds. Transition support should change to meet individual needs.

This may be represented through:

- Adjusting plans after observation
- Extra visits or staggered starts
- Continued contact with families
- Tailored support for children with SEND or emerging needs

Additional support for SEND

Some children will need extra support during transition. Early planning with families and professionals helps ensure the right support is in place before the child starts.

This may be represented through:

- Holding a transition meeting in the term before the child starts, involving parents/carers and relevant professionals
- Planning for any training, resources or adjustments needed to support the child
- Sharing relevant reports and support plans with the new setting, including successful strategies with parental consent
- Discussing and agreeing medical care plans and required adjustments
- Offering extra visits or tailored support, such as visual timetables or personalised admission plans
- Arranging a check-in meeting between the previous and new setting after the child has started, to ensure all important information has been shared

Variety of strategies -

Providers should use a range of resources and activities to support children and families during transition.

Strategies should be chosen based on the individual needs of children and families and reviewed as part of the ongoing transition process.

All families should receive an Information Welcome Pack before their child starts. This should include a book, either paper or electronic, that can be shared with the child and includes photographs and names of staff (especially the key person), key indoor and outdoor areas, and information about daily routines.

Example Welcome letters:



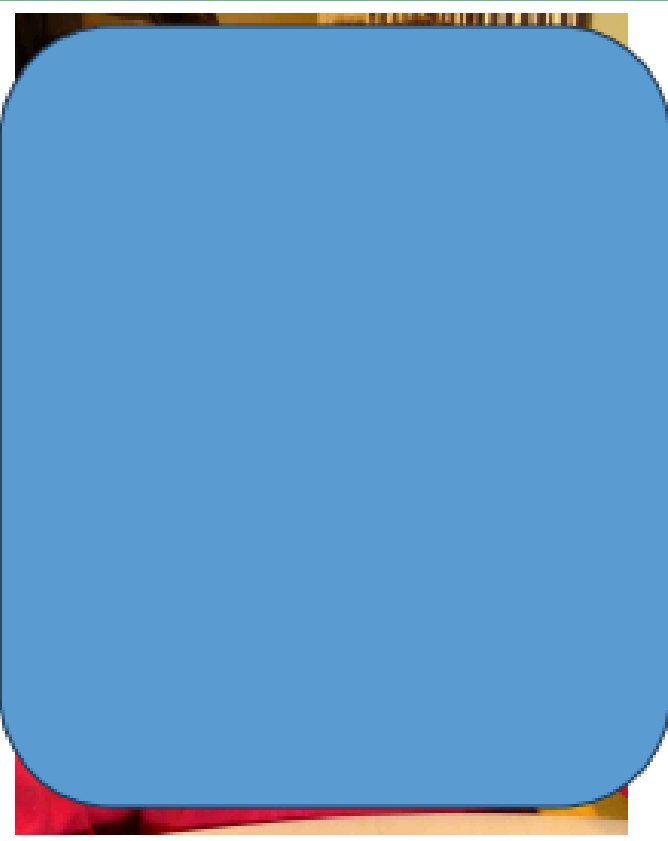
Created by Amy Sarthou. @portablemagic_reads_books

[Example Welcome letter 1](#)

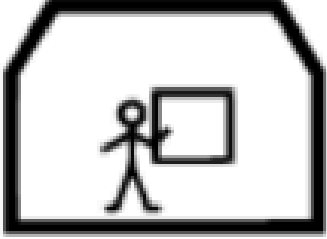
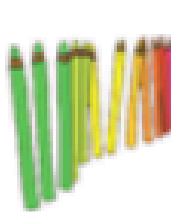
[Example Welcome letter 2](#)

Example transition booklet:

My name is



I will be in **Reception** at
 Primary School.

[Example transition booklet link](#)
[Editable transition booklet link](#)

Strategies in the classroom

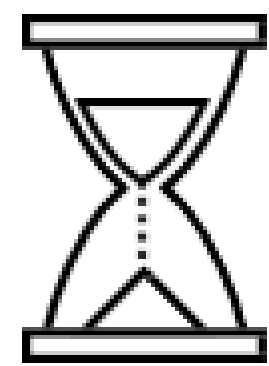
Visuals

- Display and use a daily photographic visual timetable.
- Have visuals on a lanyard to use outside of the classroom and during provision.
- Use a total communication approach for key instructions.



Transitions

- Have clear transition signals that are used consistently.
- After each transition remove the completed activity from the visual timetable to a done/ finished section and indicate what is happening next.
- Some children will need more time to process transitions. Use sand timers and visuals in advance of the whole class point of change.



Environment

- Displays are purposeful and meaningful to the children. Avoid overstimulating displays that act as wallpaper.
- Consider noise and space when creating a provision space.
- Where possible indoor and outdoor provision is open at the same time.
- There is a dedicated regulation area.



Journey to reception for parents

Starting Reception is a big step. This journey shows how settings, schools and families work together over time to help children feel safe, confident and ready to settle.

September

Admissions for Reception open. Share links ([WCC](#) and [RBKC](#)) with parents to apply. Share [Starting Reception](#) guidance.

October

November

December

January

Deadline for school admissions.
Begin to forward plan for children with SEND.

February

March

Re-share [Starting Reception](#) guidance and remind parents to keep working on independence skills.

April

May

Feeder nurseries complete transition report.
Schools to prepare transition resources.
SENCOs to arrange observation visits for children with SEND.

Parents notified of school place. Place needs to be accepted by the end of the month.

June

July

All settings to attend transition event.
Schools to hold transition event for children. Allow opportunity for parents to visit the setting.

Access the Blank Transition Proforma [here](#).



Early Years Transition Report

If there are any safeguarding concerns please share directly with new setting

Name of key person completing form:		Click or tap here to enter text.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Parental consent to share information. <i>(Please tick to confirm)</i>			
Name of Child:	Click or tap here to enter text.	Child's D.O.B:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Current Provider: (Name, telephone, email)	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date child started setting:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Hours: (days, hours, timings)	Click or tap here to enter text.	Attendance: (%)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Language(s) Spoken:	Click or tap here to enter text.	WellComm Score: EAL:	Click or tap here to enter text. <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
New Provider Name:		Click or tap here to enter text.	
Are there any areas of learning where the child is emerging and may need additional support? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N If yes, please provide details below: Click or tap here to enter text.			
Health or medical needs known (including allergies, intolerances and ongoing care needs) <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N If yes, please provide details below including: Click or tap here to enter text.			
Additional Information: <i>(Please tick where relevant)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> In receipt of EYPP <input type="checkbox"/> In receipt of DLA and / or DAF <input type="checkbox"/> In receipt of SENIF <input type="checkbox"/> EHCNA requested or in progress <input type="checkbox"/> EHCP in place (LA will send directly to new setting) <input type="checkbox"/> Social Worker involvement <input type="checkbox"/> Looked After Child <input type="checkbox"/> Child in Care <input type="checkbox"/> Child previously in Care <input type="checkbox"/> Refugee Status <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below): Click or tap here to enter text.			
Other professionals involved with child and family: (Family support / social worker / virtual school, speech & language, health professionals)		Click or tap here to enter text.	
Request for further conversations to support Transition <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Contact details (if different to above): Click or tap here to enter text.			

Access the Blank Transition Proforma [here](#).

My name is...	Click or tap here to enter text.	Add photo here
My Birthday is...	Click or tap here to enter text.	
Important people and things to me (For example: family members, pets, special people, cultural or religious celebrations, favourite routines)	I am interested in (Things I enjoy, like to play with, talk about or take part in)	
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	
I am becoming independent at (For example: dressing, toileting, eating, making choices, tidying up)	Things that help me feel safe and settled (For example: routines, reassurance, familiar adults, quiet spaces, visuals, transitional cues, comfort items)	
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	
How adults can support me (What works well for this child – clear instructions, visual supports, encouragement, time to adjust)	Anything else important to know about me	
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	

For any children with SEND, please use this inclusion passport in addition to the Transition Proforma.
Access the inclusion passport [here](#).

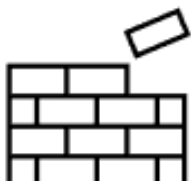




My name is...	Click or tap here to enter text.	Add photo here	Communication Partner Stage
My Birthday is...	Click or tap here to enter text.		<input type="checkbox"/> Social Partner (<i>May use some words; mainly gestures and actions</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Language Partner (<i>Uses words or signs with support</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Conversation Partner (<i>Uses sentences, words or AAC</i>)

Social Communication	Emotional Regulation & Wellbeing	Transition & Change
I communicate by (<i>tick all that apply</i>): <input type="checkbox"/> Gestures <input type="checkbox"/> Makaton or signs <input type="checkbox"/> Visuals / photos <input type="checkbox"/> Spoken words <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour (<i>please describe below</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>): Additional information: Click or tap here to enter text.	I feel calm and safe when: <input type="checkbox"/> I have quiet space I can access <input type="checkbox"/> A known adult provides co-regulation and emotional containment <input type="checkbox"/> I can move / take breaks <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>): Additional information: Click or tap here to enter text.	Change is easier when: <input type="checkbox"/> Extra processing time for transition <input type="checkbox"/> Adults narrate transition before and during <input type="checkbox"/> Specific transition supports are used consistently (<i>transitional object, sand timers, visuals, please specify below</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar adult supports me <input type="checkbox"/> Changes are introduced slowly <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>): Additional information: Click or tap here to enter text.
I can be supported through: (for example: offered choices, personalised visuals, extra processing time) Click or tap here to enter text.	My sensory preferences are: (for example: physical touch, messy play, auditory) Click or tap here to enter text.	Times I could benefit from adult support: (for example: toileting, lunch times, outside, changes to routine) Click or tap here to enter text.
Additional information:		
Click or tap here to enter text.		

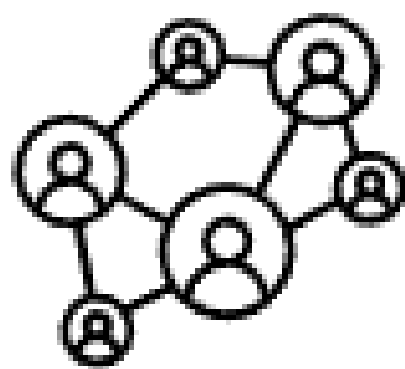
Settling into Reception

Every child experiences the transition to starting school or Reception differently. While most children will settle within 4-6 weeks, this period should be guided by each child's individual needs.

During children's first weeks focus on:

- Building strong relationships with children and their families. 
- Establishing consistent, predictable routines. 
- Supporting emotional regulation with consistent strategies. 
- Creating joyful, engaging experiences that promote a sense of belonging. 
- Prioritising time to communicate regularly and openly with parents and carers. 

Stay connected with feeder settings during the settling-in period for ongoing insights and support.



Modified timetables

Staggered starts are a common transition strategy during the initial 6 week settling in period, particularly for children with needs.

If a child is not attending full-time beyond this period, they are considered to be on a modified timetable.

Please see more detailed guidance here:

[RBKC](#)

[WCC](#)

Key points:

- Grounds for a modified timetable are always in the best interests of the child.
- It must be recorded in writing with full parental agreement.
- It needs to be regularly reviewed with parents - we would advise a formal review every three weeks.
- Support strategies must be explored and implemented to build hours incrementally.
- The goal (ambition) is to move toward full-time attendance. There needs to be full evidence of this ambition from the setting and this should be shared with parents.

For children on a modified timetable:

- Notify your Early Years and Inclusion Advisor.
- If the child has an EHCP or an EHCNA has been submitted, inform the EHCP Coordinator.
- Create a written transition record, to be reviewed with parents every two weeks with evidence of increased incremental attendance.
- Ensure the plan is agreed with and signed by parents/carers and the school at each review point.

Statutory guidance is available here:

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from August 2024\)](#)

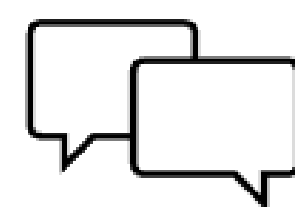
Paragraphs 65 - 70

Transition from Reception to Year 1

Moving into Year One is a big shift for children. Transition that is child-focused can be the smoothest and most successful route. Structured timetables and more formal tasks can be overwhelming, especially for children with SEND and younger children. Learning needs to be developmentally appropriate so play, well-being, continuous provision and challenge without losing joy is essential.

Handover

The EYFSP alone is not enough for effective transition. Allocate time for discussions between Reception and Year 1 teachers that capture each child's strengths, needs, and interests. Refer to children's current IEP's and successful strategies.



Timetable visits for the new Year 1 teacher to spend time in Reception to gain an understanding of continuous provision and child led learning through play.

Prioritize well-being

- Children will be coping with new spaces, adults, routines, and expectations.
- Make the unfamiliar familiar to reduce anxiety and increase confidence.
- Gradual introductions: Allow children to spend time in their new Year 1 class before the summer break.
- Maintain familiar: Use resources and routines from the EYFS for continuity.
- Provide opportunities for children to express their feelings, explore emotions through play, and have discussions about new experiences whilst in Reception and in Year 1



Continuous Provision in Year One

A well-structured Year One classroom should mirror elements of an EYFS setting whilst scaffolding learning towards more formalised approaches. Continuous provision can continue to support the curriculum and reinforce concepts in an engaging and exploratory way.



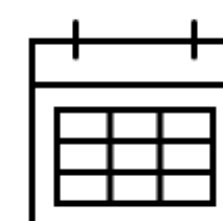
The Outdoor Environment

Timetable opportunities for children to learn outside - large-scale, open-ended exploration that encourages risk-taking, collaboration, and physical development.



A Flexible Approach to Planning and Timetabling

Avoid packing in phonics, writing, maths and everything else from the outset which will lead to disengagement and frustration. Planning should remain flexible and responsive to where children are at.



Gradually increasing the amount of direct teaching time as children settle ensures that learning remains enjoyable and meaningful.

Keep it Developmentally Appropriate

Transition isn't about losing structure or rigor, rather ensuring learning continues to be engaging, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate.



Parents and Carers

Transition to Year 1 is also a big change for families. Offer time for parents/carers to meet the Year 1 teacher, ask questions, and feel confident about the next stage.



Useful links



- [Family Information Hub | SEND Local Offer \(RBKC\)](#)
- [Family Information Hub | SEND Local Offer \(WCC\)](#)
- [Family Information Hub | Early Years Hub for practitioners \(RBKC\)](#)
- [Family Information Hub | Early Years Hub for practitioners \(WCC\)](#)
- [School admissions | Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea](#)
- [School admissions | Westminster City Council](#)
- [Best Start in Life](#)
- [Home - Starting Reception Home – ERIC](#)
- [BBC Tiny Happy People](#)
- [Starting primary school- BBC Parents' Toolkit - BBC Bitesize](#)
- [Starting School | BookTrust](#)
- [Top 8 books about starting school -Oxford Owl for Home](#)