

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

Early Years Transition Toolkit:

Document 1: A Good Practice Guide

Successful transitions for all children

From Home to the next setting:

- **Childminder**
- **Early years setting**
- **Children's Centre**
- **Nursery**
- **School**



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This toolkit can be used as a guide to your transition processes and can inform your policies and procedures. This document contains information and advice that you can share with your staff, display in your staff room and use as part of your new staff induction.

There are three documents in total:

1. The good practice guide
2. Best practice principles for the transition report and
3. A transition report template that settings can use

Section1: Introduction

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

This toolkit has been developed to support all early years providers across the Bi-Borough to have a consistent transition process and templates between all settings.

Defining Transition

Transition

- Is a significant experience for all children, but especially the most vulnerable.
- Is a 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, a person, friends, a role, an identity, a comfort zone).
- Encountering something unknown (places, people, new roles, new routines, new expectations).

Our Vision

All children will experience smooth and successful transitions throughout early years and beyond.

Aims

- To ensure all children experience smooth and successful transitions throughout early years resulting in a positive outcome for the child, parent/carer and childcare provider.
- Providers will work in partnership with parents/carers, children and any other professionals, agencies and services to enable a smooth and consistent transition from one setting to the next.
- Every child's transition is personalised and tailored to meet their individual needs.



Section 2: Key principles for good practice in supporting successful early years transitions.

The principle of well-planned transitions and of 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, practitioners and parents should be involved in the process.

A unique child – keep in mind 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. Planning for these children will need additional, personalised, individualised and flexible support.

Positive relationships – The process of adults working together contributes to smoother transitions and ensures that parents/carers and professionals understand the impact transition will have on the child. A key focus needs to be involving parents as an active partner in the process; communication is paramount with strategies/additional resources that need to be put into place, especially when you work with families where English is not the home language.

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 clear welcoming atmosphere and clear processes for supporting children's entry to the EYFS setting.

Children learn in different ways and at different rates – consider the child's holistic needs around all aspects of care and learning.

Guidelines for good practice

Right from the start babies and young children learn to manage changes in their daily lives, when these small changes are supported by responsive and caring, adults who understand their needs, children will gradually discover that their world is a safe and predictable place. As strong and competent learners, this will support them to deal with those bigger challenges and changes when transitioning to a new setting/environment.

Transitions come in many stages, whether this is the first move from home to a childminder, preschool, nursery or moving onto school or even from room to room or class to class. Children will respond differently; some may transition confidently, others with apprehension, but all children will deal with changes more easily if they happen gradually with careful planning and preparation.

- **Home visits** – wherever possible these should be offered especially for the youngest or more vulnerable children. Settings unable to conduct home visits should establish regular



communication between the new setting and the parent/carer, as this is crucial. Visiting the new setting or school plays an important part in reducing fears of the unknown and anxiety that children and parents may experience.

- **Setting visits** - Children and parents/carers should be invited to visit the new setting more than once and to have the opportunity to spend some time at the setting before the initial settling in period commences, if possible. Settling in policies should be flexible to meet the individual needs of the child.
- **Variety of strategies** - Providers should use a variety of resources/activities to support the transition process, for example: booklets, videos, photos, newsletters, open days, stay & play sessions, story times, parent conferences etc. All families should be given welcome packs before the child starts at the setting, which should include a book that can be shared with the child containing photos & names of the staff, especially the child's key person, and photos that show the main areas of the setting inside and outside (e.g. pictorial daily timetable), as well as the daily routines. This could also be done electronically.
- A welcoming setting and friendly approachable staff - signs and information displayed that reflects the languages and cultures within the setting and local community will make families and children feel welcomed.
- **Key person approach** – a named key person from the earliest point of contact with the family will be key for successful and positive transitions.
- Where possible offer stagger admissions.



- **Transition policy** - A Transition Policy will help clarify the process of transition for all stakeholders and ensure that everyone is clear about the setting's principles and practices.

Involving Parents and Carers in the Transition Process

Parents/carers are their child's first and foremost key persons; they know their children best and will have a wealth of knowledge about their child to share with the setting. Settings should listen to what they can tell us about their child to develop a shared understanding and establish an equal partnership.

We need to be knowledgeable about a child's ethnicity, language and dialect, community and locality. This will enable us to offer them familiar sights, sounds and experiences that will help them to settle and for parents/carers to feel valued and respected. We must acknowledge that for many parents/carers bringing their child to a setting for the first time will be stressful and may remind them of some of their own memories of education, which may have been negative. It is important that we put ourselves in their position and look closely at how we can make our settings welcoming and less threatening to new parents/carers so that they, in turn can give positive messages to their children.

Parents/carers are keen for their children to be happy and successful at whatever setting their child may be attending.

They want to know:

- their child will be safe and nurtured



- the setting will value the learning from home
- the setting will respond to and value children's cultural background
- the setting will respond to the needs of their child – particularly if they have SEND
- the setting will get to know their child and respond to their uniqueness
- a named key person will be spending quality time with their child and will get to know them and their child really well in order to build meaningful relationships

Involving a parent/carer fully in the transition process can greatly reduce anxiety for them and their children.

Children who attend more than one setting

Some children may attend more than one setting. For example, care may be shared between a childminder and a nursery or a school. For these children it is vital that, with their parents' consent, all practitioners work in partnership to share information.

The voice of the child

As already mentioned above, transition is a time of change and can be a source of both excitement and anxiety for both children and parents. Throughout this process, young children need to feel secure and confident that their , likes and dislikes, wants and needs will be understood and taken into account.



Early years providers [...] should know precisely where children and young people with SEN are in their learning and development. They should ensure decisions are informed by the insights of parents and those of children [...] themselves. DfE and DH (2015) *SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*, para 1.25

Children in early years rely on the adults around them to share this important information. Key persons, early years SENCOs and parents/carers should share their observations and knowledge of children's choices, and the preferences reflected in these, at every stage of the transition process. The different ways in which children communicate need to be taken into consideration - photos of people and settings, pictures, toys, role play using puppets and dolls in different contexts, can all be used to promote communication and support children to express their views in different ways.

Children with SEND

What is SEND?

A child of compulsory school age or a younger child has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- (a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age
- (b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age



- A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if they fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them

A child's transition from home to a childminder/early years setting or from a setting to school can be an anxious time, particularly if there are additional needs with regard to their development of speech and language and communication, health and physical needs or general development. Periods of change can be made less daunting if parents'/carers' views are respected and they feel that they have made a suitable contribution to what will happen when their child moves to a new setting.

It is good practice for all early years providers to arrange a meeting with the parents/carers to discuss the transition once they have received information about the child's additional needs. Ideally, this should take place in the term before the child is due to start at the setting, this will enable sufficient time for any plans or support to be put into place. Parents/carers and any additional professionals involved with the child should be invited. This early meeting will help to reassure the parent/carer that their child's needs will be understood and met by the new setting and begin to build a positive partnership between the setting and the family.

The setting should plan for any necessary training, resources or adaptations that will be required before the child starts to ensure the transition process will be as smooth as possible for all those concerned.



- During a child's time in an early years setting or school the Special Education Need Coordinator (SENCo) and the child's key person will have regular meetings with parents/carers for detailed discussions and to facilitate liaison with other professionals.
- As part of the preparation for transitioning to school, a transition meeting between parents/carers, the setting's SENCo, the child's key person and the school's SENCo (and where appropriate, other professionals) should be arranged. The transition meeting will establish better partnerships between parents/carers, the childminder/the preschool setting and the school.
- Any outside agency reports and plans should be shared/passed to the new setting when a child leaves a previous setting.
Please note that parental consent is necessary in order to share information between settings.
- Medical care plans and any relevant adjustments should be discussed at the transition meeting.
- Some children with SEND may require additional visits to their new setting before starting. These can be arranged during the transition meeting, as well as any additional support such as a new visual timetable or tailored admission plan to ensure a smooth transition.
- Childminders fulfill both the role of the SENCo and key person for all children.



For more information and support go to:

Westminster City Council Local Offer

<https://fisd.westminster.gov.uk/kb5/westminster/fis/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0>

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Local Offer

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/kb5/rbkc/fis/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0>

Section 3: Transition checklist for all providers

Children moving to a new setting

- Are you able to conduct home visits for all new starters?
- Do you provide welcome packs which are sent to parents/carers prior to their child starts attending your setting?
- Do you hold stay & play sessions, fun days, picnics etc. where children and families can meet staff on a less formal basis?
- Do you have a clear 'Transition Policy' that all staff are aware of and follow (including internal transitions – within the setting)?
- If you have a uniform for children, do you have details where parents can purchase these?
- Is information sent to families provided in languages that reflect the local community?



- Do you have staff who speak languages from the local community?

Children moving from one setting to another setting

- Once you are aware a child will be leaving your setting - have you discussed this further with the parent to gain more information on date of move, where they are moving onto etc?
- Has the new setting been contacted and a visit arranged (this may be with an individual child or small group if several children are moving to the same setting)?
- At the visit, are you able to take photos of key staff, and main areas inside and outside that will be accessed by children, to be made into a book or video and shared with the children? Ideally, each child will have their own book/video which they can take home.
- Has the new setting sent welcome packs to the new starters?
- Do you have a clear 'Transition Policy' that all staff are aware of and follow?
- Have you completed a transition form that can be passed onto the new setting?

