



Cymru
National Day Nurseries Association

Factsheet

Transitions in the Foundation Phase

Wales



Transition in the Foundation Phase

Transitions are an everyday part of our lives. We often go through transitions without realising the techniques that we are using to adapt and deal with change, using a range of skills to take us successfully through the process. Our previous experiences with transitions will determine how we deal with change; the strategies we put into place to support our decisions and our attitudes towards future transitions.

This factsheet focuses on the transition process within the Foundation Phase and the impact on children's personal, social and emotional well-being.

It explores:

- What is transition?
- Types of transition
- Planning effectively for children as they enter and travel through the Foundation Phase
- The Foundation Phase Profile
- Potential threats to promoting positive transitions
- Why is a smooth transition important?

What is transition?

A transition is 'a process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another.' It is a process, not an event and should happen gradually. Research has shown that children who have developed secure attachments will find this process easier than children who have not. Having a secure role with a key worker in the setting is essential to supporting transitions.

Contemplating change is a familiar feeling for us all. Anticipation, excitement and curiosity may well be tempered with anxiety and uncertainty, fear and a sense of bewilderment as we are faced with unfamiliar experiences, people, places or events. If we have had positive experiences of transitions during our childhood, we are more likely to learn positive ways of coping with change whatever occurs. Transitions require substantial preparation, planning, adjustment and support.

When introducing new transitions to children, ensure that you consider your own experiences and feelings about transitions and that any negative feelings you may have about change does not affect the children.

Key questions to consider when determining your own approach to transitions

- What transition in your own life do you remember most and why?
- What support did you need?
- Who was there to support you?
- What difficulties did you encounter when making the changes?
- What made it easier for you to cope or accept the change?
- How much information did you have?
- Was it a positive experience or negative experience?
- Were you involved with the process / were you consulted at any stage?
- What worked really well and why?
- What would have made it easier?

Types of transition

Life is full of transition points such as changing jobs, moving house, getting married and moving to a new area; change is a familiar feeling for all of us. We have mixed feelings of anticipation, excitement and curiosity as we move from one set of circumstances to another. By the time children enter statutory education they are likely to have experienced several transitions in family life as well as in their pre-school setting. Transitions can be both horizontal and vertical.

Horizontal transitions occur on a daily or regular basis and usually refer to movement or a change in routine. Horizontal transitions are a part of everyday life involving the changes and adjustments that children make when, for example, going from home to nursery, from nursery to swimming lessons and then from this activity back to home. Some children experience horizontal transitions where parents / carers rely on the support of family members, friends and neighbours to assist with their childcare arrangements and may experience difficulties trying to sustain a consistent level of care and a regular routine. Even the journey to your setting can be more complicated than first assumed, with friends or neighbours acting as significant others in the welfare of transporting children to and from the home.

If we take into consideration the daily arrangements presented here, a picture begins to form about the child's character and about his / her ability to deal with the variety of interactions / transitions, both formal and informal (including transitions in the same setting / school, e.g. new staff) as they occur. Each of the stages in a horizontal transition will have a different set of cultural values and norms to the next and the child will have to adapt and negotiate his or her way through each.

In contrast, vertical transitions are much more significant and linked to specific events that do not happen on a regular basis. Starting at a new setting or school is described as a vertical transition and interestingly, we often discuss children moving 'up' from nursery to primary school and moving 'up' from primary school to secondary school. The role of parents is particularly important in the vertical transitions children experience in moving 'up' from one school to another but so is the role of the practitioners.

Planning effectively for children as they enter and travel through the Foundation Phase

Ways to support transitions into the Foundation Phase:

- Building good communication with parents so they can share vital information about changes in their family, keep them informed and seek their views during any changes that may affect their child and family
- Daily routines – having five minute warnings before tidying up, tambourines / rhythmic clapping for moving onto new activities
- Observing children so you build a full picture of any behaviour changes, areas of interest and friendships to support transitions
- Visual timetables, outlining your daily routine
- Flexible inductions into new rooms / groups
- Detailed handovers between key people
- Home visits during the induction to the setting
- Work with parents to develop a weekly timetable for each child so you can understand and support their weekly transitions
- 'About our nursery' booklet – pictorial view of the setting / activities / staff for new children to take home
- For children with English as a second language, learn key language and phrases so that you can communicate with the child
- Consulting with children through each step of the transition process
- Build relationships with other professionals involved with the family and child
- Ensure your setting meets the individual needs of individuals, in regard to access, dietary requirements and cultural beliefs
- Record progress in individual learning journeys and share these regularly with the parents.

A keyworker can be a fundamental part of children's transitions within the early years. They will work with parents to gain first-hand knowledge of the child to ensure that they are able to build on the child's home experiences, to inform the planning of a learning journey that meets their individual needs. Support from parents through sharing information, photographs and achievements is very important to ensure the setting can capture all of the child's developments to create a complete picture and better transitions. Carrying out regular observations of children is essential to being aware of and able to support them emotionally through a range of transitions.

The Foundation Phase Profile (The Profile) supports assessment of children's learning and development throughout their time in the Foundation Phase. Through the use of observations and formative assessments, the profile supports practitioners to provide a developmentally appropriate holistic curriculum for all children. The profile supports Foundation Phase pedagogy and links to assessments undertaken for children aged zero to three, for example by health visitors and Flying Start practitioners, as well as other available information for three to seven-year-olds, such as that available from school nurses.

"The Profile supports effective transition arrangements and enables settings and schools to monitor, track and support children's learning and development on entry until the end of the Foundation Phase. The information gathered will aid practitioners' discussions with parents / carers by providing them with specific information on their child's development and how they may support them. The assessments gathered as part of the profile will provide useful information for all stakeholders in children's learning and development, supporting transitions between settings and schools." (Foundation Phase Profile Handbook- revised September 2017).

Ways to support transitions through the Foundation Phase into school:

- Inviting local Reception teachers into the setting to meet the children
- Find out key events the local schools are holding throughout the year to attend
- Visit the new settings / school together with the key worker
- Stories / story board around the topic of change, i.e. moving home / new babies / step-families
- Record progress of individuals and share these regularly with the school practitioners if possible.

It is important to build links with the schools that surround your local area so that you can support the transitional process to school for the children attending your setting. Practitioners will have a wealth of knowledge and information to share with the school(s) about individual

children and it is essential to share this information with the new teacher to enable a smooth transition into a new environment.

During the school's induction process, try to send the child's key worker to one of the sessions with the children so that they can explore an unfamiliar environment with a trusted, familiar adult there to support them as and when they need it. You could also set up a display of the local school with a photograph of the reception teacher and of the indoor and outdoor environments; this will allow the children to become familiar with their new school. If the children are going to be wearing a uniform for the first time, why not ask the school if you can borrow a uniform for the role play area (which you could set up as the classroom) so the children can practice wearing this and playing role play games.

"In the most effective settings, leaders ensure strong links with local schools to help children when they move on to the next stage of their education. Children visit the school on several occasions to watch concerts and take part in singings sessions, and to meet their new teacher during the last term in the setting. Teachers from the schools also visit the settings regularly, for example to read stories to the children and discuss their needs with practitioners."

Estyn, The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2018-2019

Potential threats to promoting positive transition

Social disadvantage – The child's ability and aptitude for learning will be restricted if they are living in poverty. Reduced family income can restrain the child's active engagement and hinder his / her educational progress. There may be limited access to clothing, books and computers etc. They may not be given the opportunity to visit places of interest. There may be family stresses due to financial difficulties. The child may suffer from ill-health due to poor living conditions.

Fragmentation – As the make-up of the family unit changes, parents / carers may rely on informal childcare arrangements, or the child may experience a range of childcare arrangements during the week (wraparound care, after school care) which can appear fragmented for the child if there are no connections between the settings to support the child.

Disconnection – Parents / carers who themselves have had bad experiences as children when they attended school, or childcare, may feel distanced from what it has to offer in terms of supporting their children now.

Diverse cultural groups – Children attending nursery may not speak the main language of the setting and therefore will need extra support from the practitioner to ensure that practices are flexible, inclusive and responsive to the child's needs and abilities.

Why is a smooth transition important?

For children:

- To reduce levels of anxiety when experiencing change
- To prepare them to feel more confident, ready to play and able to interact with peers
- To increase their ability to cope with new experiences
- To familiarise them with the new setting / school, its staff and the children
- To be aware of the new expectations and routines of the nursery / school.

For parents / carers:

- To aid them in supporting their child in the transition process
- To help them to gain greater awareness and understanding of the learning which will be undertaken
- To promote a good working partnership and effective communication between the nursery / school and families
- To reduce the parent / carer's anxiety about separation from their child.

For the setting:

- To gather information in order to plan effectively for each child's needs
- To promote positive partnerships and develop good relationships with all families
- To establish routes of communication
- To reduce any difficulties around transition.

Further support and NDNA resources.

- The Foundation Phase profile (Animated explainer) - <https://bit.ly/37GUphZ>
- Foundation Phase Profile: guidance for practitioners. Statutory guidance for assessment of 3 to 7-year-olds during the Foundation Phase - <https://bit.ly/2JwFvLQ>
- 'Effective Partnership Working' A case study demonstrating how a stronger working relationship has impacted directly on the quality of transitions the children experience between settings - <https://bit.ly/36qKyGG>.

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National Day Nurseries Association

Taflen ffeithiau

***Meddwl mwy disglair
ar gyfer y blynyddoedd cynnar**

Caiff ein tafleni ffeithiau eu hysgrifennu gan arbenigwyr blynyddoedd cynnar ar gyfer y gweithlu blynyddoedd cynnar. Mae'r rhan fwyaf o'n tafleni ffeithiau am ddim ar gyfer ein haelodau.

NDNA yw'r elusen genedlaethol a'r gymdeithas aelodaeth sy'n cynrychioli meithrinfeydd plant ar draws y DU. Rydym yn elusen sy'n credu mewn safon a chynhaliadwyedd felly rydym yn gosod busnesau ein haelodau wrth galon ein un ni.

Ni yw llais y sector meithrinfeydd a'i 21,000 o aelodau, ac yn ran o fywydau dros filiwn o blant ifanc a'u teuluoedd. Rydym yn darparu gwybodaeth, hyfforddiant a chyngor i gefnogi meithrinfeydd a'r 250,000 o bobl sy'n gweithio ynddynt i ddarparu dysgu cynnar a gofal plant o safon rhyngwladol.

Gwelwch yr ystod lawn o dafleni ffeithiau NDNA ar www.ndna.org.uk/factsheets

Mae'r wybodaeth ddarparwyd yn y daflen ffeithiau yma at ddefnydd ymarferwyr blynyddoedd cynnar yn unig. Ysgrifennwyd y daflen gan arbenigwyr blynyddoedd cynnar ond ni ddylai gael ei ddefnyddio fel allddodyn i gyngor proffesiynol. Mae NDNA wedi ymdrechu i sicrhau cywirdeb y wybodaeth gyflwynwyd yn y daflen ffeithiau. Nid yw NDNA yn atebol yn gyfreithiol nac yn gyfrifol am eich dehongliad nac eich defnydd o'r wybodaeth a ddarperir

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