

Transition Guidance

Early Years

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Early Years Transition Guidance

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About this document

This document was co-produced by West Sussex Children's Services, in consultation with colleagues from schools and the wider early years and childcare workforce. It has been developed to build on existing good practice and to ensure that all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have access to a transition experience based on best practice.

Aim

The aim of this guidance is to:

- establish a coherent county wide transition procedure for all children in the early years, including those with special educational needs and disabilities; *and*
- provide children, parents, teachers and practitioners with tools and materials to support this process.

Introduction

In their early years, children go through many transitions and changes. In the context of early years education and childcare this will include starting at a setting for the first time, moving on to a new activity, moving between rooms, or moving to a new setting.

Supporting children to manage transitions smoothly is important for children's emotional wellbeing and achievement, and planning for these transitions is fundamental to effective early years practice.

To ensure continuity of experience for children, transition should be seen as a process rather than as a one-off event. Discussions involving the child, parents and others who know the child throughout the planning process will support successful transitions.

Each child will have a different response to transition, so it is important to try to understand the child's individual needs and responses based on previous experiences and current circumstances. This will help practitioners to plan support to meet children's emotional, learning and care needs through the process of transition. Practitioners should also observe children's behaviour to try and understand how they might be feeling through the process and adapt their support in response to these observations. Parents will also have crucial information to support practitioners in understanding and meeting the needs of each child.

Following a transition, it is important to review the effectiveness of the support and continue to observe the child to identify any additional support they may need in settling following a transition and in planning for future transitions.

Terminology used in this guidance

In this document, we have used the term "pre-school setting" to refer to the range of early years settings that children attend before they start school. For simplicity, the term "setting" has been used where the information refers to both pre-school settings (including day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders) and schools. In the context of transitions, it can also refer to a different room within the setting that the child attends.



We have used the term “parents” to refer to the adults with primary caring responsibility for a child.

We have used the term “practitioners” to refer to staff within settings. This could include early years practitioners, teachers, teaching assistants.

Principles of transition

The following principles are appropriate for all transitions:

- the child’s and parent/carers views are central to, and in evidence in, the planning for a child’s transition;
- effective communication between the setting, parents and other people involved with the child;
- fact finding about a child’s needs, including current and previous involvement of other agencies, the child’s interests and any specific details that will help them to settle;
- reflection on how the child has responded to previous transitions and using this information to plan for the next transition, considering the child’s experiences and development since then; *and*
- discussion about changes to the environment/routines that may be needed

Information sharing

Information sharing builds on the good practice of parent partnership and recording accurate information about any concerns identified and the actions taken in response. Parents should always be aware of any concerns identified by the setting unless this would lead to harm to the child. In most circumstances, parents should be aware of, and have access to, any records held about their child. All information recorded should be factual, precise, and recorded in a way that makes clear any concerns identified, the impact for the child and what actions are being taken to mitigate the risks identified.

To support children’s safety and wellbeing, it is crucial that key information gathered about a child is shared between settings at transition points. This is important to ensure continuity of support for the child and family as well as allowing the new setting to have the full picture of the needs of the child in order to safeguard them and support their wellbeing.

A child’s start at a new setting can be seen as a “fresh start” for them and, while this is a positive approach for children, it is crucial that the new setting has the full information about the child as this is a protective factor to keep the child safe. With all the information to hand, practitioners at the new setting can provide appropriate support and be alert to any changes in circumstances that may signal any issues re-emerging.

Key information that you should share with the new setting includes:

- A list of professionals currently involved in supporting the family – including their role and contact details;
 - Any safeguarding / child protection records that you have kept whilst the child has been attending your setting;
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- Information about any vulnerability factors that you know about the child or family using tools such as the Children's Learning and Well Being Audit (CLaWBA), including the previous involvement of Early Help or Social Care; *and*
- Information about the child's learning and development within the setting, including assessment information, Learning Journals and any information about a child's SEND and other support needs, including individual planning records.

When passing on information to a new provider, you need to make arrangements to share the information securely and you may wish to create and keep a record of the information given to the new setting, signed by both parties. Where possible and appropriate, a conversation between providers should accompany the transferral of recorded information.

Safeguarding information can be shared without parental permission. However, it is good practice to discuss any concerns with parents so they are clear of your worries and your actions to support them and their child, unless sharing this information would put the child at greater risk of harm. Please see [Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual](#) for more information.

If a child for whom you have significant concerns leaves your setting without informing you of where they will now be attending, you need to notify the local authority to discuss next steps.

In some instances, for example if a family enters a refuge, it is important for information to be shared without disclosing the child's previous and/or current location. In this situation, please contact the Family Information Service (01243 777807 or family.info.service@westsussex.gov.uk) who will support the transition of documents to the new provider.

Please ensure that you understand, and share with parents, the [privacy notice](#) for parents of children accessing early years and childcare provision so that they are aware of and understand what information is shared about their child and why this is important.

Children with SEND or other additional needs

Most children, given appropriate support, will make a smooth transition and will quickly settle in their new environment and new routines. For some children and families, transitions can be particularly challenging. Additional planning will be needed to ensure the child and family needs are met throughout the transition process. This would include making appropriate adaptations to the learning environment and routines within the setting to support the individual child. More information and guidance to support settings can be found on the [Tools for Schools and Education Settings](#) website.

If you are working with a child with identified SEND, emerging needs, multi-agency involvement or any other vulnerability, the universal transition offer may not completely meet their needs. To ensure the appropriate level of information is shared and planning put in place for a smooth transition, practitioners should additionally arrange to complete a [Supported Transition](#).

For children starting school, in addition to a Supported Transition, settings may wish to consider a referral to a [Specialist Advisory Teachers – Early Years SEND Transition](#). This could be where you feel that a child will need ongoing support that is above what

is Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice (OAIP), and the school is likely to require advice and support from specialist teams to meet the child's needs.

Key elements of good transition practice

1. Transition is made a priority

Transition should be seen as an ongoing process throughout a child's life. Key information should be shared prior to any child starting in a new setting or moving within the setting and within their daily routine to inform transition planning. Adults should be mindful of what the child's behaviour is communicating about their current support needs and respond to this communicated need.

2. Providers should consider to what extent their policies and procedures ensure the following:

- Parents know what kind of information you will need to help their child to settle, including the child's Personal Child Health Record (the Red Book) to gather health information;
- Parents are made aware of the information that will be shared with other professionals and why this is important;
- Parents complete and discuss with the new setting an "All About Me" profile and registration document to ensure that the child's Key Person is aware of their starting points, strengths interests and needs and can provide appropriate support when they start. These documents should be updated as the child grows and develops;
- There is clarity about who is responsible for gathering information about a child and who will need to contact other professionals for more information; *and*
- If there is a gap between leaving one setting and starting at the new setting, practitioners ask for an update on the child's learning, well-being and development from the family and the previous setting to ensure they have all the information needed to plan for a successful transition.

3. Parents feel confident about their child's transition so they can support their child well

Support parents to access key information and attend events to explain the transition process and what the new setting will be like. You could consider events for parents to meet each other or peer support for any parents who are particularly anxious about their child's transition.

Ensure parents understand what the routines are to drop off and collect their child so that they can communicate this positively to their child. Parents understand how they can discuss any concerns that they have about their child's experience within the setting.



4. When starting a new setting children and parents are given opportunities to make frequent visits to the new setting

Arrange sessions for children to attend and familiarise themselves with the new environment and meet the new staff. Offer opportunities to visit with staff from their current setting and with family members. If parents cannot attend, it might be helpful for children to attend with another family member. Offer flexibility in the number of, and timings of, the visits to meet the individual needs of a child.

5. When starting a new setting, children are familiar with the people, places and routines

Alongside setting visits, children have opportunities to talk about their new setting and remind themselves about what they have seen on their visits. Consider providing children with photos, books or videos showing key staff, the environment and routines.

It is important to note that children may not want to talk about the transition. Practitioners and parents should follow the child's lead and respond to their behavioural cues.

6. Children receive a home visit before starting in a new setting

Visiting children and their families in their home environment can give valuable information about the child's background and help to build a positive partnership with parents. This will support the child's learning and experience in the new setting. Home visits should take place as close to the child's start date as possible.

7. Parents are involved, consulted and supported

Research shows that parental engagement has a significant impact on the outcomes for children. Consider how your setting gathers, values and responds to the information, hopes and concerns of families.

Each family should know, and have regular contact with, their child's Key Person to enable an ongoing partnership in their child's learning journey. The Key Person should have the knowledge and understanding of the child's starting points and home culture to build on their strengths and interests within the setting.

8. Children's friendships are acknowledged

Consider how your groupings support can be used to support children's existing friendships when starting in a new room within the setting or when starting school.

9. The setting is flexible in meeting individual needs

It is important to understand each child's individual feeding, sleeping and toileting needs so you can be ready to meet these when they start. It is crucial to understand the child's current stage of development, rather than assuming their development based on their age, to support their needs and next steps in learning. For example, if a child is not yet able to join a small group time, consider how to support the child to access similar learning opportunities in a different way. You can then create a plan to build on what they can already do and support them in their next developmental steps.



10. Those requiring a supported transition are identified and planned for as early as possible

Gathering information from the child's family, current setting and any other professionals supporting the family will enable you to identify, plan for and meet the needs of all children. You will then be able to make a more detailed transition plan for children with additional needs. The hopes and wishes of the family should be reflected in your planning.

Refer to [Supported Transition Plan](#) for guidance to support you in planning for the transition of children with additional needs. This will enable you to have all the resources that you need ready for the child's start and ensure that successful strategies from the child's home and/or previous setting are implemented within their new setting.

Starting School

All of the above principles should be considered when planning the support for children and families before they start school. In addition to the usual transition processes, West Sussex holds [Transition Events](#) each May for children starting school. These events happens soon after the school places are shared with families as part of the [Starting school places](#) admissions process.

The purpose of the Transition Events is for the sending pre-school setting to give a brief overview to the receiving school of all children who have been offered a place in that school from September. The information shared at this point will include an overview of each child, including patterns of attendance, friendships and identify any children with additional needs

At these events it is not possible, or appropriate, to give detailed information about children who will need additional transition support, but these children would be identified so the school and setting can start the [Supported Transition](#) process.

For some children with SEND who need a Supported Transition, settings may need to make a referral to the [Specialist Advisory Teachers – Early Years SEND Transition](#).

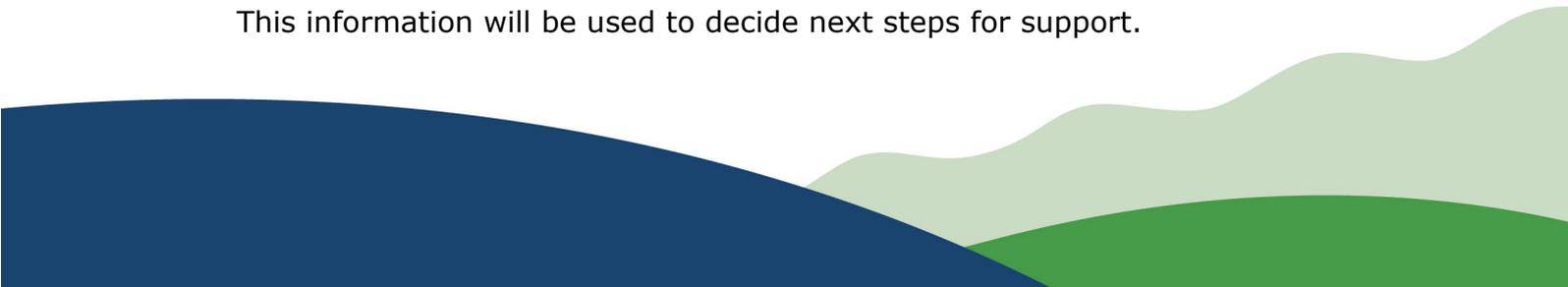
Before making a referral to the Specialist Advisory Teachers – EY SEND Transition, it is helpful to understand the criteria that they use to triage requests:

- A child with additional needs who has been accessing targeted adult support in nursery e.g. such as following specific and tailored activities designed in liaison with another professional and may require targeted support in school.

The EYSAT will consider each referral on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration, other factors including but not limited to the following:

- needs of child,
- experience of setting and school staff,
- staff new to role including the SENCO,
- EYSAT knowledge of school and setting etc,

This information will be used to decide next steps for support.



Ideally, referrals will be made during the spring term, but settings can refer later if required. If a referral has been made, or will be made, this information should be recorded on the Transition Event record so that the school are aware of this.

It is important that all schools and early years settings engage with this process by attending [Transition Events](#) and follow this guidance to ensure the effective sharing of information between pre-school settings and schools and that schools can start to plan for the children arriving at the earliest point.

Attendance at the events will reduce the time that pre-school settings and schools spend in contacting individual settings to share information and plan visits and any other required meetings.

Support when a child's school placement is uncertain

For some children due to start school, their placement may be uncertain. This could be for a number of reasons, including:

- The school application may have been made after the closing date
- The family may be relocating
- The family may be considering delaying their child's school start
- The child may be having an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment and/or waiting for a specialist school placement
- The family may have declined the school place offered and being requesting a different school

This situation will have an impact on the transition process and may also impact on the child and family wellbeing. Practitioners in the preschool setting should be aware of the potential challenges of this situation and the support that may be needed. It will be important to communicate well with the family so that the setting is aware of the situation and any changes. Practitioners should also be alert to the child's needs and any support that they require.

Once a school placement is confirmed, the setting will need to carry out the transition process, although this may look different due to the timescales resulting from the delay.

Children starting school at a different time to their peers will need a planned transition. The transition process will need to consider the specific needs of a child starting school at a time when peers have already settled in the class.

Documentation to support the transition to school

West Sussex have templates for providing key information at points of transition for children starting school. Although each setting will have documentation that they use within their setting to record children's progress, for consistency in the information shared, we ask all settings to use the formats provided.

There are two templates available to support universal transition:

- a Transition Event Record; *and*
 - a Transition Summary.
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These are [available to download](#) from our website.

Transition Event Record

Purpose

To provide a brief overview, in a consistent format, of the children to be discussed with schools at the Transition Events. The information recorded provides a prompt to support professional discussions between pre-school settings and schools to support effective transitions.

To identify those children and families who will require additional transition support.

Timescale

The document should be completed by the relevant practitioner(s) within the pre-school setting before the Transition Events. It is expected that the setting manager will have oversight of the information recorded and that the practitioner(s) attending the event have sufficient information to provide an overview of the children they will be discussing.

Guidance

Practitioners should complete the documents before the events and ensure that the practitioner attending has understood and is able to communicate the key information to the receiving school.

If possible, the information should be recorded on a separate sheet for each school, so that a copy can be given to the school at the event. If this is not possible, the information will need to be recorded by the school on a blank template. Information about children should only be shared with the school where the child is expected to start attending.

Where the school placement changes after the Transition Events have taken place, it is expected that the school deletes the records for any child who will not be joining them and the pre-school setting shares the information with the school that the child will now be attending.

Example

An example of a completed Transition Event record can be [viewed or downloaded](#) from our website.

Transition Summary

Purpose

To provide a consistent format to share key transition information for every child moving on to school. This information is more detailed than the information shared at the Transition Events as it will form the basis of the school's planning for individual children.



To ensure all schools receive key information about the children transitioning so that they can ensure a good start to their school life and that each child continues to make good progress in their learning and development, building on the experiences they had in their pre-school setting.

Timescale

To be completed by the Key Person during a child's final weeks at their pre-school setting and, once verified by the pre-school setting manager, passed on to their receiving school. Recognising that children will make progress in their learning and development through to the end of their time at their pre-school setting, this document **is not** designed to be shared at Transition Events.

Guidance

Pre-school settings should complete the three-page document for every child moving on to school. The document can be completed electronically and emailed to the school or printed to complete by hand and delivered to the school.

The information recorded will enable receiving staff to prepare for the child's arrival in school, ensuring that their interests are reflected in the environment and experiences offered. With relevant information, any support needs can be put in place prior to entry, minimising anxiety and disruption for the child.

This is a summative record and therefore should reflect levels of attainment on leaving the pre-school setting. It is anticipated that a best fit judgement will be entered for each area of learning. For pre-school settings using an electronic progress monitoring tool, please transfer those judgements on to the progress review. Please use judgements in the development areas – within, below or above expected development range. Briefly recording next steps, progress made, areas of support and effective strategies will add more information for the school to support their understanding of the child's stage of development.

The document provides a record of documentation shared with the setting, including current and historic information required to keep children safe and well in their new setting.

Example

For an example of a completed Transition Summary record can be [viewed or downloaded](#) from our website.

