

Managing Transition in Playgroup Settings

Good Practice

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) recognises that transition can be stressful for children and adults and can have a far-reaching impact on children's emotional well-being and academic achievements" (EYFS All AboutTransitions). It is recommended therefore that transition be made a priority in all early years settings,

Here are some suggestions to help you evaluate your current practice.

Home to Playgroup:

- Encourage frequent visits with parents to the playgroup prior to starting. This gives opportunities to see the playgroup running smoothly and to meet settled children and to participate in some activities.
- Open session to meet other parents, children and staff. Time to meet the key workers, to explain settling in procedures and playgroup routines.
- Settling in procedures should be clearly explained to parents to help them understand how you will settle their child.
- Child/parent friendly booklet to take home, with photos of the playgroup staff and the playgroup (e.g. toilets, cloakroom, indoors and outdoors).
- Offer flexible, staggered start times with parents able to stay during this period, or to be close at hand if needed.
- Regularly review each child's settling with parents and key staff.
- Prior to child starting playgroup, meet with parents to share information about how the playgroup operates (fees, hours etc). Also share information about the child:
 - Important adults in the child's life
 - Child's interests
 - Favourite foods
 - Sleep patterns
 - How the child usually shows anxiety or distress
 - What soothes/comforts them
 - Child's motivation/schemas (patterns of play)
 - How the parent would like to approach the first separation

Within Playgroup:

- Allow parent and child the time they need to separate.
- Collect current contact information in order for parents to return to collect distressed children.
- Encourage parents to stay close to the playgroup and return if their child is distressed.
- Create an informal, relaxed start to the session, coming into an active environment with continuous provision (as opposed to carpet based or registration routines).
- Offer flexible admission and settling procedures to address the individual needs of children and families.
- Although children benefit from some degree of predictability and routine, a rigid timetable does not meet the needs of all children. A play based session is difficult to achieve when interrupted by snack time, registration time, and outdoor play time. Rules and routines should be carefully considered to meet the needs of all children.

Playgroup to Nursery:

- Frequent visits to nursery with parents.
- Invite nursery staff to observe children in the playgroup.
- Arrange meetings between playgroup and nursery staff.
- Let the children share their individual files/photos with nursery staff.
- Prepare a scrapbook for children who are leaving, Add photos, captions, observation notes and examples of work. Send home as a souvenir of their time in the playgroup.
- Take familiar/favourite objects from playgroup to nursery.
- Provide children with a little book containing all the names of the children and staff in their new setting.
- Playgroup staff to attend open day at nursery wherever possible.
- Talk through the transition process with children to prepare them for any potential changes.

For further information:

Transition & Attendance Good Practice Toolkit for Early Years Settings (0-5 years) www.newcastlechildrenservices.org.uk/enjoy

All AboutTransitions (EYFS)