

# Supporting Positive Transitions in the Early Years: Guidance for Practitioners

Guidance and documents to help Early Years staff support successful transitions for children *into, within and from* their setting

Early Years Educational Effectiveness Team and SEND Team

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**SURREY**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

## What's in this pack?

**This resource pack provides information and templates to support early years practitioners (including childminders) facilitate smooth transitions for their children. This may be when children are joining their setting, moving room, moving to a different setting, or starting school.**

Section 1 – Guidance – this document:

- What are transitions and why are they important
- Preparing for transitions – a tailored approach
- Checklists for different types of transition
- Specific guidance to support children transitioning to school
- Developing Your Practice – A tool to support transitions
- Useful links

Section 2 – Appendices – separate document:

- Table of appendices and 'when to use what'
- Editable transition document templates

*(Note: these are in a separate word document so that you can save and edit them easily according to your needs)*

## Transitions: an overview

### **What do we mean by transitions in early years education?**

A transition is a point at which a child makes a significant move from one part of their education journey to another. Within the early years, transitions can mean starting at a setting, moving from room to room within a setting, moving from one setting to another, or moving on to school.

### **Why are positive transitions so important?**

Positive transitions support young children's development and emotional wellbeing. The quality of the transition can impact on a child's ability to feel safe, play and learn.

The way in which the first transitions are handled could have a significant impact on the child's capacity to cope with change in the short and longer term.

### **Who is best placed to support positive transitions?**

*“The Key Person’s role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build up relationships with their parents.”* (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2024, for group and school-based providers 3.34 on page 28, and for childminders 3.38 on page 21)

It is vital that a high-quality transition experience is offered to all children in the early years, which ensures continuity between home, key people and all the settings that make up children's individual learning journeys.

Settings and parents should work together to share information about the child to ensure a positive transition. There may also be other professionals involved in supporting the child who should contribute.

For children with SEND, the SENCo and the child's Key Person will need to work closely together.

## Preparing for Transitions

Starting the first or next phase in a child's education journey is always a big step for the child and their family. We know that settings and schools normally have a range of activities to support children to become more familiar with new environments, routines, staff, and other children.

This guidance and the supporting editable documents are designed to support early years settings to plan carefully for transitions. The templates in the appendix aim to capture the child's voice and what is important to the child and family. It is best practice to work together with the parent/carer to complete transition information. This can help to lessen anxiety for both children and parents.

### **Tailoring transition support:**

Transition support is not a 'one size fits all'; each transition is unique to each child. Each child copes with change differently depending on their past experiences, or family circumstances, or character, or specific needs. Some children may require a more planned approach to an upcoming transition.

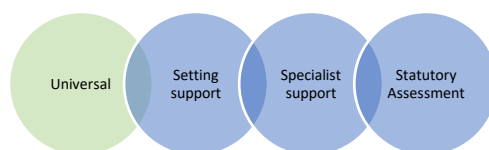
It is strongly advised that a transition meeting takes place for all children with additional needs, with safeguarding flags, or for those for whom you have concerns. Please use the transition meeting templates in this pack to guide this process.

All resources in this pack are for you to use how you wish, based on your understanding of the needs of each child. There is no expectation for all templates to be used. You may wish to complete the forms fully, or use them as checklists, or prompts as a record of your conversations. You may have other systems in place that you feel work successfully or you can use your current 'All About Me', tracker and summary sheets should these suit your needs better.

*If your child has a Surrey Support Plan, there is no need to duplicate information you already have.*

### **Transition needs according to the graduated response:**

The documents in the appendix are labelled and organised as *Universal, Setting Support, Specialist Support or Statutory Assessment*. The selection of documents you choose to use will depend upon where the child sits within the Graduated Response:



- Universal - Most children sit within the universal response. Children at universal level make good progress within the EYFS.
- Setting Support - The majority of children will have their needs met through an early years provision which adapts to meet individual need. Some children may require additional support within and provided by the setting, to ensure they meet their outcomes. This may include children for whom you are claiming Early Intervention Funding (EIF), enabling you to differentiate the curriculum or your approach to meet their needs.
- Specialist Support - Children at Specialist Support have a targeted plan in place with support and advice from multi-agency professionals and may also be supported through Early Intervention Funding (EIF).
- Statutory Assessment - Where, despite action taken to identify, assess and meet the needs of the child with the involvement of multi-agency professionals, the child has not made expected progress, the setting or parents may consider requesting a statutory assessment which may result in an Education, Health and Care plan.

## Transitions Checklists

Things to consider when supporting children, families, and practitioners through different types of transitions:

*(Note – this is not a definitive checklist and should be used as a guide to support reflections. Useful documents are referenced in the appendix)*

### **Moving from home into nursery (or childminder setting):**

- ✓ Have you asked the parent for a copy of the child's 2-year progress check or 27-month health review (if relevant)?
- ✓ Have you completed a personal information page and one page profile in conjunction with parents? (appendices 1 & 2)
- ✓ Have you carried out a home visit if required? (appendix 5)
- ✓ Have you shared all information with parents about your setting and gathered all required information about the child?
- ✓ Have you used information about the child's interests to plan your environment and support? (appendices 1 & 2)
- ✓ For children with additional needs, have you organised a transition meeting? Have you spoken to your SEND Advisor or Early Years Advisor if needed? (appendices 6 & 7)
- ✓ If the child is being supported by outside agencies, have you requested copies of the reports to plan your support?
- ✓ Have you started a Surrey Support Plan if there are known additional needs? Have you considered whether transition funding is needed to support the child's start at the setting? (appendix 10)
- ✓ Have you carried out a settling-in review for children that required additional support to settle in? (appendix 8)

### **Moving age group rooms:**

- ✓ Do you have written transition procedures in place that all staff understand and are available to parents?
- ✓ Has the existing Key Person updated the child's one page profile and recent assessments/summary of learning and development? (appendices 1-4)
- ✓ Have you ensured that time has been given for the child's existing Key Person and new Key Person to share information?
- ✓ If the child has a Surrey Support Plan has this been updated and shared? Has the new Key Person had time to discuss the child's intervention and support with their setting SENCO?
- ✓ Have you used information about the child's interests to plan your environment and support? (appendices 1-3)
- ✓ Has a visiting schedule been put into place that is individualised and agreed with parents?
- ✓ Has the new Key Person been to visit and play in the child's existing room?
- ✓ Has the child and their current Key Person visited the child's new room together?
- ✓ During the visits is there an opportunity for the new Key Person and existing Key Person to introduce the child to the environment and play together with the child?

### **Moving from one early years setting to another:**

- ✓ Have you gained parental permission to share information with the child's receiving setting?
- ✓ Have you provided a brief written summary of the child's interests and development? (appendices 1-4)
- ✓ If the child has a Surrey Support Plan, have you ensured that you have emailed a copy to the child's receiving setting via egress?
- ✓ If the child has additional needs or you have any concerns regarding their development, have you organised a transition meeting? (appendices 6 & 7 and appendix 10 if relevant).

- ✓ Have you received information from the child's receiving setting? If not, please contact the child's previous setting, with parental permission.
- ✓ As the receiving setting, have you asked parents for a copy of the child's 2-year progress check or 27-month health review if relevant?
- ✓ Have you carried out a home visit if required? (appendix 5)
- ✓ Have you arranged settling in visits?
- ✓ Have you shared all information with parents about your setting and gathered all required information about the child?
- ✓ Have you used information about the child's interests to plan your environment and support? (appendices 1 -3)

### **Moving from early years setting to school:**

Please see the moving-into-school-specific information from page 7 for a more detailed overview of how all adults involved can support a child's transition from nursery/childminder to school.

### **Transferring safeguarding documents:**

- Share the whole safeguarding file with the setting/school DSL
- Ensure the DSL who receives the file signs for it
- Keep a copy of the receipt
- Hand delivery is preferable but if not ensure it is posted as signed for so you can track delivery
- If you are concerned about sharing safeguarding information, please contact the Education Safeguarding Team for further advice:  
[education.safeguarding@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:education.safeguarding@surreycc.gov.uk)

### **Remember...**

Information sharing regulations and protocols must always be followed. Settings need to ensure they have consent to share information, and evidence the processes followed if decisions are made to share information without consent (usually only ever in a safeguarding scenario).

## School specific transition

A joined-up approach in supporting children with getting ready for school proves most successful. There are three key stakeholders:

- Ready Children
- Ready Families
- Ready Schools

*'Being ready for school starts at birth with the support of parents and caregivers, when young children acquire the social and emotional skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and life'.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-school-readiness-creating-a-better-start-for-london>

All three stakeholders play an integral part in preparing children for school and life. They must work in partnership to support the on-going development of a child and the transition into school.

### Ready Children



I can communicate my wants, needs feelings and ideas

I am happy to play with others

I am able to do some things for myself - dressing/going to the toilet/finding my own coat

I am happy to explore and try new things

I can follow instructions from adults

I can follow routines

I am happy to be on my own

### Ready families



Families can:

Play an active part in sharing information about their child

Rehearse or plan the journey to school

Support dressing up in school uniform

Visit school

Teach children to use the toilet on their own

Support the child to recognise their own name - add name tags to school kit

### Ready schools



Schools can:

Make photo transition books

Hold open mornings

Hold transition meetings with EY setting

Offer a home visit

Look at paperwork shared by the Early Years setting

Form partnerships with families

## Supporting Transitions into School

Families	Early Years Provider	School
<p>Accept and/ or decline school places offered within the required deadline (usually 2 weeks after initial offer).</p> <p>Let your child's early years setting know which school place you have accepted (mid-April).</p> <p>Work with your child's early years setting to complete your child's EY's transition paperwork as required. Sign and date the paperwork, giving written permission for your early years setting to share with your child's receiving school. Sign and return any GDPR consent to your child's new school.</p> <p>Attend school open days and enquire about other opportunities to visit local schools. Sign up to schools' emails/ newsletters.</p> <p>If your child has SEND, speak to your child's early years SENCo and new school SENCo about a transition meeting (meeting template provided in this pack). If relevant look at the <a href="#">SEND Local Offer</a> and <a href="#">Surrey Family Information Service</a> for advice on finding the right primary school.</p> <p>Start talking to your child about moving to school. You can show them photo books or social stories. Talk to your child about what they are going to do at school and who their teacher is.</p> <p>Ask your early years setting if any of your child's peer group are going to the same school; talk to your child about familiar children and the new friends they are going to make.</p> <p>Take part in home visits with the school and any settling in visits.</p> <p>There is advice about activities that you can do with your child to help prepare them for school. The Family Information Service has produced a downloadable <a href="#">booklet</a> on their webpage.</p> <p>Also Child and Family Health Surrey have produced a webpage with tips to get your child ready for school, accessed <a href="#">here</a></p>	<p>Reflect on and review previous transition processes.</p> <p>Begin or continue to establish links with your main feeder schools.</p> <p>Share with parents <a href="#">Apply for a place at a primary, infant or junior school - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Remind parents to apply for school places in time. Remind them to accept or decline places offered within the required deadline (usually 2 weeks after initial offer).</p> <p>Share any school Open Day dates via newsletters, email, noticeboards etc. and encourage parents to make contact with their child's school. For children with SEND, see the <a href="#">SEND Local Offer</a>, and Finding the Right Primary School <a href="#">Finding the right primary school in Surrey - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)</a>. 'Questions to ask the SENCO' are included in this pack.</p> <p>Share with parents the 'Get Ready for School Booklet' <a href="#">Get ready for school booklet - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Share with parents the 'One minute Guide Preparing for School@ <a href="#">One-minute guide preparing for school (surreycc.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Give parent advice about activities they can do with their child to help prepare them for school. There is more information in 'Get Ready for School' that can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Ensure information sharing policies and permissions are in place so that transition information can be shared with schools.</p> <p>Consider holding meetings with parents to discuss transitions and getting ready for school, and work with parents to complete or update any transition paperwork.</p> <p>Ensure that any concerns or issues highlighted in the 2 year progress check or general EYFS monitoring progress forms have been addressed and recorded.</p>	<p>Reflect on and review previous transition processes. Offer feedback sessions to feeder settings on how their children from the previous year settled into Reception and their overall progress over the year.</p> <p>Begin or continue to establish links with your feeder Early Years settings.</p> <p>Share your plans for transition with your feeder settings. Encourage them to signpost parents to any School Open Days, time with teacher sessions or virtual tours</p> <p>Create a photo prospectus of the school that can be given to parents.</p> <p>Liaise with feeder settings to arrange a brief discussion about each child. Children with SEND or safeguarding concerns may need a longer session with SENCO or DSL</p> <p>Tours of the school arranged with parents. Tour of the classroom and other areas of the school/setting that child will use such as hallways and corridors. The tour should include all areas of your provision including entrance and outdoor space.</p> <p>Let parents know about the school uniform, promote online ordering and delivery, or bulk order of uniforms to school with a pay and collect appointment service Consider funding for support with uniform costs from local charities. Contact the Early Years Educational Effectiveness team via <a href="mailto:earlyyearsadvisors@surreycc.gov.uk">earlyyearsadvisors@surreycc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Encourage teachers to record themselves reading stories or singing songs and email to the children.</p> <p>Make or update photo transition books to share with parents and Early Years providers and send out.</p> <p>Send a postcard/letter to all children telling them you are thinking of them and looking forward to meeting them properly very soon.</p>



<p>Talk to your children about going to school in a happy and positive way, rather than being something to worry about. If your child is worrying, reassure them with lots of cuddles that it is ok to feel worried. Listen to their worries, answer their questions and be sympathetic.</p> <p>Encourage your child to develop the skills they will need to get dressed and undressed independently. Encourage them to try on their school uniform.</p> <p>Involve any siblings in preparing your child for school.</p> <p>Help your child to adapt to new experiences and environments, for example introducing new play spaces and opportunities at home and on day trips.</p> <p>Consider helping your child deal with changes to plans and routines, for example take a different car journey than normal or change your usual timings slightly.</p> <p>Consider supporting your child to use the toilet and wash their hands on their own.</p> <p>Consider supporting your child to take part in mealtimes, encouraging the skills they will need to eat and drink independently.</p> <p>Help your child to write a postcard to their new teacher to introduce themselves (they can draw a picture or use stickers).</p> <p>Take each day at a time. Your child may be excited to go to school on the first day, but then perhaps the changes they experience cause them to become anxious. Changes in behaviour or their sleeping patterns for example may indicate that your child is worrying or anxious. Discuss any concerns you have with your child's class teacher</p>	<p>Liaise with feeder schools to arrange a brief discussion about each child.</p> <p>Children with SEND or safeguarding concerns may need a longer session with SENCO or DSL. Contact School SENCO to arrange individual transition meeting (meeting template provided in this pack).</p> <p>In some cases, there may be some children that require a more intensive transition, with joint planning work between home, setting and school. This may involve the child's Key Person visiting the school with them, or the child's new teacher visiting your setting. Using A Surrey Support Plan, Early Years providers can apply for funding for this. Please contact Early Years Advisors: <a href="mailto:earlyyearsadvisors@surreycc.gov.uk">earlyyearsadvisors@surreycc.gov.uk</a> or for SEND needs please contact your Early Years SEND Advisor <a href="http://Supporting children with SEND - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)">Supporting children with SEND - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Send support paperwork via secure email to SENCO. For support with managing transition meetings and sharing of information please contact your area Early Years SEND advisor.</p> <p>Child Protection information should be shared following the usual process. For support or further information please contact the Early Years Educational Effectiveness Team at <a href="mailto:earlyyearsadvisors@surreycc.gov.uk">earlyyearsadvisors@surreycc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Help children adapt to new experiences and environments; for example, introducing new play spaces and opportunities within the setting for children to explore. Consider enhancements to continuous provision to help children get 'ready for school'. E.g., provide school uniforms/PE kits to practice dressing skills, lunch clubs so that children are used to handwashing, sitting and feeding themselves, school classroom in role play area, share stories and school photo books together, and have discussions about starting school.</p> <p>Arrange a teddy bears picnic with all setting leavers as a celebration of their time at your setting</p> <p>Hand over children learning records to parents.</p> <p>Create a goodbye or leavers book with photos and messages for the children from the staff and other children.</p>	<p>Create a social story of things you will see from the entrance to the classroom.</p> <p>Carry out home visits or settling in visits</p> <p>Request parents send/email a photo of their child for their peg so you can show these in tour</p> <p>Set up termly meetings to discuss shared interests (including children, provision, areas of learning, information to parents etc) and develop joint training opportunities</p>
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## Developing your practice tool: Transitions

A transition is a point at which a child makes a significant move from one part of their education journey to another. Within the early years, transitions can mean starting at a setting, moving from room to room within a setting, moving from one setting to another, or moving on to school.

Positive transitions support young children's development and emotional wellbeing. The quality of the transition can impact on a child's ability to feel safe, play and learn.

The way in which the first transitions are handled could have a significant impact on the child's capacity to cope with change in the short and longer term.

*Key person 3.35 Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents and/or carers. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate*

[EYFS statutory framework for group and school based providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/eu-efy-2017-2020-statutory-framework-for-group-and-school-based-providers.pdf)

[EYFS statutory framework for childminders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/eu-efy-2017-2020-statutory-framework-for-childminders.pdf)

It is vital that a high-quality transition experience is offered to all children in the early years, which ensures continuity between home, key people and all the settings that make up children's individual learning journeys. Settings and parents should work together to share information about the child to ensure a positive transition. There may also be other professionals involved in supporting the child who should contribute.

For children with SEND, the SENCo and the child's Key Person will need to work closely together.

- This tool could be used alongside [Development Matters](#) (Sept 2021), [Birth to five matters](#) and the [Help for early years providers web page](#).
- This tool can be also used in conjunction with the ITERS/ECERS scales.
- This tool is not an exhaustive list of ideas, there may be may other points you wish to consider
- It should be shared with your colleagues to develop practice.
- It will support you to identify individual strengths in practice and areas where understanding the world can be developed further.
- It will ensure that children's development for communication and language is embedded across all areas of learning

Setting name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Practice statement	Prompts	Comments/what can we do next?
A transition policy/procedure is in place and reviewed on a yearly basis	<i>Policy/procedure is shared with parents, policy reviewed with staff, settling in policy, communication and correspondence with new parents is evaluated, successes of transitions are shared on the website, Surrey Transition Guidance and templates are used.</i>	
Staff have an understanding of the different transitions children experience and how	<i>Information about other transitions the child may have experienced/going to experience is</i>	

they may affect their PSED and future transitions	<i>sought eg moving house/attending another setting, child is provided with familiar resources and experiences, transitional objects are used, transition training is attended.</i>	
Information is gained about children's past experiences to support successful transitions	<i>All About Me forms, One Page Profiles, home visits, discussion with parents/other setting, registration forms, 2 yr progress check, 27 month health review, settling in visits, information about a child's starting points are gathered, each transition is unique to each child, experiences are provided which reflect children's home life and culture.</i>	
Staff recognise some children will need a more supportive transition and exchange of information	<i>As above, multi agency meetings for children with SEND, additional settling in visits, shorter sessions, close working between SENCO and key person, transition funding, understanding the impact of EAL, cultural differences, traumatic experiences, separation anxiety, the effect of COVID</i>	
Transitions are a process, not an event	<i>Clear process for transitions throughout the year, story times/drop-in sessions for new families to get to know the provision before child starts, visits to events at other rooms, new setting, feeder school, existing key person meets with new key person, new key person visits and plays with child in new room, staggered admissions, mid year admissions are replicated in the same way, review daily with the key person and parent on how the child is settling in, settling in review</i>	
Information for new families is clear and welcoming	<i>Welcome pack with photos of staff and settling in process, provision for parents with English as an additional language or poor literacy skills, parent's anxieties are responded to sensitively, story times/drop-in sessions for new families to get to know the provision before child starts, parents invited to stay with the child as they adjust to the new environment</i>	
Staff recognise the importance of each child feeling 'known' and special to their key person	<i>Songs &amp; rhymes to learn each other's names, stories collected to make books about children in the group, Family photos from the child, photos on display, buddy support, early attachment, key person relationships, a place for own belongings, photographs of children (taken with parental permission) for labels and in welcoming displays,</i>	

	<i>children's interests reflected in the environment</i>	
Staff recognise strong relationships with the family and secure attachments between the child and their key person is essential in supporting transitions	<i>Key person Approach/policy, Key person buddy system, key person forms a connection with the child and family before they start, eg home visits, Staff profiles on website, postcard to home, key person forms good relationships with the child and family, planning the environment around their interests, key person provides consistent warm care, children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships and a sense of security following a transition, children feel safe and secure through continued connection between home and setting, being encouraged to bring in familiar objects from home, eg comforters</i>	
There is a smooth and effective transfer of information to the child's next setting or school	<i>Permission obtained from parents, completion of records, transfer of safeguarding files</i>	
Parents are supported in preparing children for the next stage in their education, promoting independence and encouraging success	<i>Information for parents such as 'Is your child starting school in September?', parents are reminded to apply for school places in time, reminded to accept or decline places offered, school Open Day dates shared via newsletters, email, noticeboards etc, parents encouraged to make contact with child's school, children with SEND signposted to SEND Local Offer, information provided to parents getting ready for, and applying for school places using links found in the transition pack.</i>	

## USEFUL LINKS:

Carol Gray: Social Stories <https://carolgraysocialstories.com>

Pacey: Being School Ready- [Being school-ready | PACEY](#)

What to expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage [What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](#)

Eric – <https://www.eric.org.uk/>

Activities for parents and children - [Early years resources for learning at home - BBC Bitesize](#)

Getting Ready for School Booklet - [Get ready for school booklet - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

[Starting primary school - BBC Bitesize](#)

School Admissions [www.surreycc.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/admissions)

[Finding and applying for a school | Surrey Local Offer](#) (for children with additional needs, SEND or an EHCP).

Please now see the separate appendix containing all editable templates