



## **A Guide to Positive Transitions**

### **Why do we need to plan structured transitions?**

The benchmark of a good transition is providing children with certainty and clarity. Although approaches may differ between settings, the sharing of information is vital to ensuring a positive and smooth transition for the pupil. This might be facilitated through a transition meeting. The guide below highlights some key considerations for supporting positive transitions.

### **Having a clear transition document**

It is helpful to collate information about a child into a clear transition document that can be shared with the family and relevant professionals. STLS have created a simple transition document called “**This is Me**” that can be used to incorporate important transition information alongside pupil and parent views. This can be found here <https://www.meadowfield.kent.sch.uk/index.php/midas-and-stls/stls-resources/stls-eyfs-digital-support-pack/transition-documents/>, alongside a variety of other supportive resources. It is good practice to gain parental permission before sharing information with another setting.

### **A checklist of key information to include in a transition document**

**The answers to these questions should be shared as part of a positive transition.**

- Does the child have any specific or specialist toileting needs? This includes information about help you may currently give the child e.g. Tommy can toilet independently but will need support to do his trousers up when he leaves the cubicle. Useful support and advice relating to toileting for parents and professionals can be found at the ERIC website: <https://www.eric.org.uk/Pages/Category/help-at-school>
- Does the child have any dietary requirements or rigid food preferences? This includes information about help you give the child at mealtimes e.g. If you support the child by unwrapping certain foods, cutting food up, opening lunchboxes or providing special cutlery. This also includes information about food and drink preferences e.g. Sahar only drinks milk; efforts to include water into her diet have so far been unsuccessful. Sahar will become dehydrated if she is not allowed to drink milk.

- Does the child currently use visual resources? What are these and how are they used? You may choose to give these resources to the new setting if they are specifically personalised, or send photos so that they can be recreated at the new setting.
- Does the child have any specific routines or structures in place at the setting? What are these and how are they used? This might include the use of now and next boards, timetables, and the inclusion of motivating activities e.g. Kai likes to sit in the sensory tent when distressed or Ben eats his lunch at 11.30am and sits separately from his peers as he does not like people watching him eat.
- What are the child's interests? Do they have any specific motivators?
- Does the child have a personalised reward system? What does this look like? How does it work?
- Is there any specific information relevant to the child's family, or social and emotional wellbeing that needs to be shared? This might include information about family living arrangements, recent bereavements, phobias, languages spoken at home or any other information that might help the new setting better understand the child, their family and their life.
- Does the child have any specialist equipment for use at school? Why is it used? How is this equipment used, how does it work? Who agreed it's use e.g. Is it a reasonable adjustment or an OT directed intervention? Quality first equipment might include items such as ear defenders, timers, wobble cushions, chewy items and personalised resources.
- How does the child communicate? Are they supported with signing? Are any communication aids used with the child? This might include supports such as objects of reference and choice boards.

### **Key things to consider:**

Transition support should be differentiated to the child's developmental stage not necessarily their age.

Familiarity is reassuring. Structured transitions allow the sharing of practice and resources to provide children with consistency. Seeing a familiar visual timetable or continuing the use of the same now and next approach can reduce anxiety and improve the likelihood of positive engagement in a new setting.

Knowledge is power. The more a new setting knows about a child the more likely they are to be able to appropriately meet their needs and ensure their wellbeing. Don't underestimate the importance of sharing your good practice with the new setting, especially information relating to the reasonable adjustments or resources you have made to support the child. Don't underestimate how well you know the child and how valuable this information is e.g. Kira can easily be distracted when she is distressed by being provided with the opportunity to play with water.

### **STLS supporting resources**

The benchmark of a good transition is providing children with certainty and clarity. With this in mind we have created a package of digital resources, comprising of

printable support documents and instructional videos, in order to provide settings and schools with support at this important stage of a child's education.

These resources are suitable for use with all children in EYFS settings, not just those known to STLS or with an identified SEND need. Many of the resources support quality first provision and will also be relevant for supporting EYFS pupils at other points in the school year <https://www.meadowfield.kent.sch.uk/index.php/midas-and-stls/stls-resources/stls-eyfs-digital-support-pack/>

### **A final word about worry**

Anxiety is a feeling of worry or unease about something with an uncertain outcome. At times of transition and change anxiety is a common reaction of children and adults to the situation we find ourselves in. Stress occurs when demand outweighs PERCEIVED ability to cope. The best way to overcome transitional anxiety is to create a plan of HOW the child is going to manage each worry. This helps to create perspective and increase the perceived ability to cope by offering a practical solution. Endlessly discussing a worry does nothing to reduce it, but creating a concrete plan will. This works for adults as well as children!

The BBC has a variety of advice for children, including some specific advice on anxiety suitable for young children which can be found here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zwcfp4j>

Further advice and support for anxiety can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/anxiety>

