

Transition – A Collaborative Approach for Sefton

Introduction

As the Early Years sector continues to diversify and grow, it has never been more important to ensure that children are placed at the heart of everything we do. Transition into school is a major event in any child's life which can be a source of both excitement and anxiety for both them and their parents/carers. Planning for transitions is fundamental to effective early years practice. Some children, such as those with SEND or those who may have experienced trauma may need additional transition arrangements.

This guidance has been written for all Sefton early years settings, childminders, schools, and linked professionals to support consistent and effective transition planning for all children. It focuses primarily on transition to school, however many of the approaches will be useful to support any of the transitions which young children experience (e.g., starting at an early years setting, moving between rooms or classes in a setting or school, and transitions within the daily routine etc).

Why now?

A successful transition is a crucial factor in the positive development of children's confidence and wellbeing. Research clearly indicates that a successful transition not only impacts on the child's wellbeing but also their future social and academic progression. A successful transition also supports children's future ability to deal with changes which occur in their lives. As Sefton adopts and integrates the principles of Attachment & Trauma Informed Practice, and the high value on neuroscience and child-centred practice, it has never been a better time to reconsider our practice regarding transition, and to develop a more child/family centred approach which supports every child whatever their needs may be.

What is our vision?

That all children in Sefton benefit from a tailored and successful transition where they are placed at the centre of the process and their needs are considered at every stage. Families and the knowledge they have of their children is respected and taken into account, and the vital information they provide is used to aide transition. All sectors of care and education work together to realise this vision and ensure all children receive a transition which nurtures their optimal wellbeing and development.

Who has been involved in the development of this vision?

A shared understanding of what is important to young children during this time of change is vital to successful transitions. With this in mind, children, families and educators have been consulted to ensure the guidance and documentation we produce is fit for purpose. This has included:

- Consultation with children currently in Sefton nurseries and reception classes.
- Hearing the voice of parents and carers of Sefton children.



- Representation from the Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector
- Representation from schools including teachers and head teachers.
- Collaboration from the Local Authority Quality team for Early Years, including Quality Improvement Officers and Team Leader.
- Collaboration from the Local Authority SEND team for Early Years, including Inclusion Consultants and the Portage Service.
- Contributions from the Lead Educational Psychologist for Early Years.

What are our aims?

- **To support schools and settings to provide all children with positive transition experiences that foster their wellbeing, learning and development**
- **To build on existing good transition practice across Sefton**
- **To provide clarity regarding responsibilities, processes, and strategies that support transition to enable a coherent and consistent approach**
- **To develop a shared commitment from all professionals to improve transition experiences for our young children, particularly those with SEND.**

Transition and School Readiness

People often focus on whether a child is 'ready' for school when discussing starting school, despite school readiness meaning different things to different people. Traditional concepts of school readiness are often criticised for their emphasis on a child's skills and characteristics. Some of the most important elements of helping children to be 'ready' for school relate to ensuring that they are confident that school will be a positive experience for them and feel supported with positive relationships. When children are happy to be at school, when they are healthy and feel valued, their learning and development will follow. Children are best able to develop a positive attitude to starting school when they have opportunities to talk about what it will be like and are given realistic information about school experiences and expectations, supported by the important adults in their life.





Key Principles of Successful Transition in Sefton:

- Transition should be seen as a process rather than an event
- The child's voice is heard and valued as part of the process
- There is continuity of inclusive child centred provision across early years settings and schools
- Parents and carers are valued, informed, included and supported to navigate the transition process.
- Senior leadership teams in schools and early years settings have a commitment to good transition support as well as respect of one another's aims and ethos.
- Strong integrated working between early years settings, schools and other agencies supports good transition.
- Well-organised and up to date information is shared in a timely manner and is used to inform school planning.
- Children are supported to prepare for transition and relevant strategies and resources are shared to ensure consistency and continuity in their new school.
- There is early identification of need supported by effective early intervention.
- There is recognition that enhanced transition arrangements will be needed for some children.
- Commitment to CPD underpins good practice and includes staff development to support understanding of transition and of SEND.
- There is continuity of support for children with SEND from specialist teams across early years settings and schools.

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up'.

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2021 5)

'SEN support should include planning and preparing for transition before a child moves into another setting or school. This can also include a review of the SEN support being provided or the EHC plan. To support transition, information should be shared by the current setting with the receiving setting or school. The current setting should agree with parents the information to be shared as part of this planning process'.

(Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0:25 years)



'Key to a high-quality experience for all children in the early years is ensuring continuity between home, key people and all the settings that make up children's individual learning journeys.'

(Birth to 5 Matters)

A suggested timeline for transition – a process not an event.

Transition is a process that takes time. It is vital that all professionals working with children in the EYFS have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in relation to transition and of the processes and strategies that support a positive transition for all children.

The following timeline shows the key responsibilities and strategies at different points in the year, for both early years settings and schools. The timeline sets out actions to support ALL children and then actions that are 'additional to or different from' these that will be needed to support SOME children.

'Some children' would include children with SEND, children with emerging needs, those who may have experienced trauma and those unique children who require additional support for whatever reason.

As well as providing clear expectations in relation to responsibilities, the timeline can also be used to support reflective discussion amongst teams and provide an opportunity to audit current practice and provision.



Term	Actions to support ALL children	EY Setting	School	Actions 'additional or different from' to support SOME children
AUTUMN TERM PRIOR TO TRANSITION TO SCHOOL	Update transition policy regarding this guidance document.	√	√	
		√		Ensure September census/headcount data reflects all children with SEND
	Arranging and publicising school open days for prospective families Ensure the school website is up to date to support parents/carers making informed choices e.g. EYFS provision.		√	Ensure that school information for prospective parents/carers is accessible to all families. School website information is up to date to support parents/carers making informed choices, e.g. SEND information.
	Encourage families of Pre-School children to look at local school websites and to attend school open days	√	√	Families of children with SEND may need additional support when looking at school information and when visiting different settings. Practitioners and school staff may need to set time aside for these additional discussions, and to signpost families to relevant agencies who could support further with this process, such as SENIS, SENDIASS, Contact.
	Signpost parents/carers to information about primary school admissions, and how and when to apply.	√	√	Parents/carers may wish to consider specialist provision for their child with significant and complex needs. All parents and carers should be encouraged to complete mainstream school applications. In Sefton and nationally, most children with SEND will be included and educated in mainstream provision.
	All practitioners monitor and review children's development to identify and plan for any emerging needs.	√		
		√		SENCo/key person liaises with the Early Years SEND team and SENIS to inform the ongoing support of children with identified needs.
		√		Submission of EHCP assessment to be completed for children with significant and complex needs. Appropriate request for involvement to outside agencies, including Early Years SEND team and SENIS.



Term	Actions to support ALL children	EY Setting	School	Actions that are 'additional to or different from' to support SOME children
SPRING TERM PRIOR TO TRANSITION	<p>Reminders should be sent to all parents/carers of the January deadline for those who have not yet made their primary school application.</p> <p>All practitioners continue to monitor and review children's development as Autumn term.</p> <p>Early Years practitioners should consider attending Transition CPD.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>Families of children with SEND may need support with the school application process. All families should be encouraged to complete a mainstream school application, regardless of EHCP status.</p> <p>Ensure SEND records reflect children identified with SEND ahead of children transitioning to school in the next academic year.</p> <p>Any EHCP's that require an Annual Review should be scheduled to take place before mid-February.</p> <p>Request for Involvement should be submitted to the Early Years SEND Team, SENIS and any other relevant professionals or services.</p> <p>SENCo/key person liaises with the Early Years SEND team and SENIS to inform the ongoing support of children with identified needs.</p> <p>Submission of EHCP assessment to be completed for children with significant and complex needs.</p> <p>SENCo attendance and Inclusion CPD on 'Supporting transition'.</p>



SUMMER TERM PRIOR TO TRANSITION	<p>Primary School places are confirmed in April. Information and updates and acceptance status is collated. All families are encouraged to respond to offers as soon as possible and engage with the transition process.</p>	✓	✓	<p>Ensure April census/headcount data reflects children with SEND.</p>
	<p>Commence sending and closing transition process for all children moving on to school. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide children with new language for change, such as 'new, different, same, beginning' and use stories/books to support discussions. Consider those children that are staying at the setting. ✓ Be open to discussions about transition during child initiated or adult led opportunities supporting feelings, hopes and fears; exploring 'what might be the same and what might be different'. ✓ Adaptation of the curriculum to include activities such as undressing for PE. ✓ Photos of new schools on a noticeboard. ✓ Invite school staff to visit and meet children transferring to their school. ✓ Events and resources can be used to celebrate the time that children have spent in the setting, for e.g., a leaver party, certificates, photos. ✓ Use a transfer record for all children who are starting school by the end of the summer term to pass on important information. ✓ All safeguarding information shared in a secure manner. ✓ Attend local transition event to have face to face discussions and to handover records. 	✓	✓	<p>Once school places for children have been accepted, the early years setting, and school should begin communication about enhanced transition in partnership with the family. Meetings and Visits organised as needed to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Education Plans • Individual Healthcare Plans • Personal Education Plans <p>Parents/carers of children with SEND should respond to mainstream offers unless they have a final EHCP.</p>
		✓	✓	<p>Commence enhanced sending and closing transition process for some children. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support development of independence in relation to self-care skills ✓ Exploring emotions with individuals in relation to change ✓ Use individual visual aids, such as social stories, countdown calendar, photobooks etc to support children to prepare for transition ✓ Ensure activities and resources that will support some children to feel that they will be 'kept in mind by the early years setting and do not feel rejected, e.g. showing them that their picture will be kept in a book or on the wall. ✓ Invite the school staff to meet the individual children in the early years setting and to observe interventions in practice. ✓ Attend a transfer meeting to review any relevant planning documents. ✓ Signpost any relevant CPD for reception class practitioners in relevant specialist interventions that the child receives. ✓ Arrange for the transfer of individual resources, e.g. sensory resources, social stories, PECS books. ✓ Liaise with therapists for collection and delivery of any specialist equipment ✓ Access further support which may be available if the child is known to the Early Years SEND team and/or SENIS.



Term	Actions to support ALL children	EY Setting	School	Actions 'additional or different from' to support SOME children
SUMMER TERM PRIOR TO TRANSITION TO SCHOOL	<p>Commence receiving transition process for all children due to start school. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear induction policy and procedures ✓ Up to date early years information on the website, e.g. staffing, environment, the routine etc ✓ Staff to visit children in the early years settings. ✓ Invite children and their families to visit the school, e.g. stay and play, story-time, teddy bears picnic. ✓ Welcome pack containing essential information including forms for allergies, contact numbers, password and interests. ✓ Welcome events to share key information with parents/carers; introduction to governors etc ✓ 'Hello' postcard sent to children ✓ Read and consider information in transition records to inform planning for the class and individuals ✓ Reflect on additional information and peer relationships shared at local transition event when planning for the class and individuals ✓ Planning the reception class environment to support children to settle including mirroring of early years visual supports 	√	√	<p>Commence enhanced receiving transition process for some children. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ School staff to make additional visits to individual children in their early years setting and to observe interventions in practice. ✓ A transition transfer meeting may be arranged by the SENDco of the current setting. This may be attended by parents, the child's key person, the Early Years SEND team, SENIS, the school SENDCo and class teacher, to share any relevant planning documents. ✓ Receive, disseminate and consider any documents for children who have SEND, including confirmation of any transitional funding. ✓ Consider employment/deployment of staff to ensure that individual children's needs can be met with reference to any additional funding. ✓ Arranging staff CPD in relevant specialist interventions. ✓ Plan the reception class environment and layout to support individual needs including the use of individual equipment and resources. ✓ Plan the reception class curriculum to support children to settle well and build on progress, particularly in relation to interactions and targeted interventions <p>Although requests for involvement to outside agencies, including Early Years SEND team, may be made, support will only be allocated in exceptional circumstances.</p>



Term	Actions to support ALL children	EY Setting	School	Actions that are 'additional to or different from' to support SOME children
AUTUMN TERM FOLLOWING TRANSITION TO SCHOOL	<p>Continue receiving transition process for all children starting school. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Each child is allocated a clearly identified key person and their role explained to parents/carers ✓ Home visits to meet parents/carers, when possible, to gather information. ✓ Photo's on pegs ready before the children start to give them a sense belonging ✓ Staggered entry to enable smaller groups of children to become familiar with the staff, environment, and the routine before full cohort attendance. ✓ Flexibility around parent/carer handovers. ✓ Taking children on tours of the learning environment, both inside and outside as well as other significant areas of school ✓ Invite families to share examples of children's previous work, e.g. learning diaries. ✓ 'Welcome' displays for children and photo board of staff with names and interests for children and their families to look at together. ✓ Acknowledge that there may be children who find transition more difficult and that a flexible approach may be beneficial. 	√	√	<p>Continue receiving transition process for some children starting school. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Key person to be familiar with 'All About Me' information, strategies and targets, strengths and areas for development, linking in regularly with parents and carers ✓ Relevant information shared with other school staff as appropriate. ✓ Individualised settling in programmes- this could include a quicker transition for some children as well as a slower one. ✓ Receive any delivery of specialist equipment and arrange for appropriate storage and training in its use. ✓ Consider use of a transition object from home or early years setting for individual children who may be feeling particularly anxious. ✓ Consider use of a buddy system ✓ Favoured activities to be available for individual children with limited interests. ✓ Ensure individual resources, e.g. sensory resources, social stories, PECS books have been received from the early years setting and are available to the child. ✓ Home school communication books may be useful.
	<p>Receive feedback from parents/carers and professionals to inform review or transition process for all children</p>	√	√	<p>Gather feedback from parents/carers and professionals to inform review of transition process for individual children.</p>

Please remember to forward copies of Sefton's Transition Record along with any additional SEND paperwork to the appropriate school.



Children in Care and Children Previously in Care

Children in care and children previously in care will benefit from the actions outlined in the timeline above that are 'additional to or different from' those provided for all children. For these children practitioners will also need to be aware of the following information:

Children in Care will have regular Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings as part of the care planning process. A PEP meeting with a specific focus on transition will be planned for the summer term prior to transition, with the Designated Senior Lead at the new school. An 'enhanced transition plan' will be agreed at this meeting.

Because of the unique and specific circumstances of Children in Care, plans need to be flexible as sometimes there is mobility or change. It may be necessary to modify plans or organise further meetings with different schools as a result. As ever, sensitive support and strict confidentiality will be needed.

Children previously in care will benefit from a similar planning process and meeting to organise an 'enhanced transition plan'. With the agreement of the family, it would be best practice to invite the Designated Senior Lead from the new school to this meeting.

Children who are supported by Children's Social Care

This concerns any child assessment as needing a social worker at any time due to safeguarding and/or welfare reasons and includes all children subject to a Child In Need Plan or Child Protection Plan. This cohort of children is identified as a group of children who may face significant barriers to education and their experiences can affect their attendance, learning, behaviour and wellbeing.

Children who have a social worker will benefit from an 'enhanced transition' plan and it is best practice to invite the Designated Safeguarding Lead to any meetings and to ensure the child's Safeguarding file is transferred within 5 days of the child starting at their new school. All safeguarding information should be shared in a secure manner following national and local guidance.

Children who attend more than one setting

The EYFS 2021 states that providers must maintain records and obtain and share information to ensure the needs of all children are met. Providers must enable a regular two-way flow of information with parents/carers, and between providers, if a child is attending more than one setting (3.69)

For children who attend more than one setting, the transition documents should be completed by the setting where the child spends most of their time. Other settings attended by the child should work in partnership to inform completion of these records.