

Transition in the Early Years

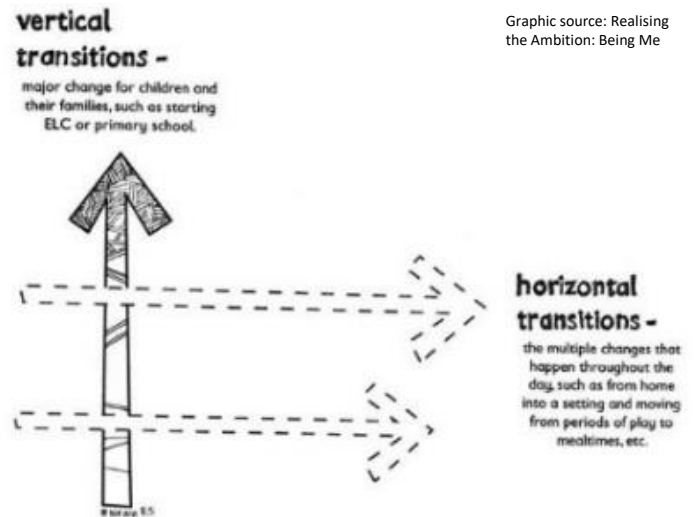
“A successful transition experience at this stage is likely to influence whether or not they can develop their full potential, and their ability to cope with future transitions.”

(OECD,2017:13) Realising the ambition: Being Me 2020

Important note

The content of this document is linked to the big changes (vertical transitions) that a child with Additional Support Needs (ASN) experiences in the Early Years; home into an Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting, between ELC settings or split placements and into Primary 1. It considers the transition from the child's perspective, that of the family and all current and receiving staff. The aim is to prepare for the change to make the transition a positive experience for all with effective communication to ensure a seamless process.

Realising the Ambition: Being Me (RTA) talks about the 5 Cs; child-centred, communication, consistency, collaboration and culture, which contribute to positive transitions for all children. However, it also recommends the creation of “**bespoke and or enhanced transition arrangements for children with additional support needs**”. This can be explored further in **Section 8, point 8.7 of RTA**; Key features of positive transitions practice for babies and children and families who need additional support.



Graphic source: Realising the Ambition: Being Me

When preparing for a big change we should:

- have the child at the centre and personalise planning to the needs of the individual;
- be timely in planning and delivery;
- be proportionate to the level of need and inter-agency involvement;
- involve the child and parents/carers throughout the process;
- embrace effective communication and information sharing between parents/carers and current and receiving partners; and
- comply with Highland Council guidance.



The information below details some ideas and strategies which support best practice and building positive relationships within this context. For more detail and ideas see the **Transition Planning Tool**.

Child-centred

These significant or vertical transitions may be first big change in a young child's daily life. An ELC setting may be the first place that a child has spent substantial time away from home. Building positive relationships is key at this stage and underpins wellbeing and the success of future play and learning.

The Early Level stage of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence includes children aged 3 to 6 and so many of the activities, routines and the play-based learning approach should be familiar to children starting Primary 1. Building on known routines and keeping it familiar should help children make sense of their new surroundings. This should hopefully reduce any possible anxiety.

Some children with support needs require enhanced transitions and further planning to ensure a positive experience. This could include some of the practical strategies outlined below:

- Introduce new staff, where possible, to the child in their current environment. Find out from adults who know them well what motivates, interest, upsets and comforts them. What strategies are already in place to support them and what works.



Psychological
Service Home
Visiting Teachers

EASEYS for ASN

Encourage And Support Early Years Skills for Additional Support Needs

Transition in the Early Years

- Introduce the child's Key Worker, possibly through extra visits, and build a trusting and confident relationship through sharing familiar activities from home which the child enjoys. Share successful approaches amongst all the staff to ensure a consistent approach to meeting the child's needs.
- Consider ways to help the child prepare for their transition. This might include visits to the new setting to help familiarise them with the environment, new routines, expectations and spaces e.g. classroom, assembly room, gym hall, canteen, playground, etc. With the expansion in ELC setting hours children have become more familiar with many of these routines and spaces.
- Other strategies used to support transition may include: a social story, [photo book](#) or video clips showing the new people, 'buddies', places and events. These can be shared with the family in the lead up to the transition.
- Consider using visuals such as a countdown calendar as a visual display to show when the change is happening but be aware that for some children this may cause anxiety if introduced too soon.

We often need more time to plan an extended transition in preparation for some children moving on. However, if started too early, it can impact on the child and be a cause of anxiety. The staff and parents need to plan and prepare in the background but let the child enjoy the here and now of their current setting.

Involving the family

- Work in partnership with the family to gather and share the best information possible. Consider discussing specific health needs, protocols, the child's strengths, motivators, triggers, things they need support with, things they do well and the strategies which have been found to be successful at home. This information could be recorded in a document like [Being Me! All About Me](#).
- Arrange for the parents/carers to visit the new setting and meet new staff, including the Key Worker.
- Discuss a suitable communication method that meets the needs of the family and setting. Look at [EASEYS for ASN Communication with Home](#) for some ideas.
- Share your [Settling In policy](#) with the parents/carers and adapt as required to meet the child's needs.
- Meet with parents/carers regularly to review the transition plan arrangements. Be sure to capture their knowledge of their child, their child's prior learning and their child's wider achievements.

Involvement of staff and all partners to the transition plan

- Arrange visits and meetings between all current and receiving staff, and other professionals to enable good information sharing.
- Consider staff training, especially in relation to a child's specific health or communication needs.
- Ensure health and safety issues are discussed and risk assessments and protocols in place e.g. allergies, pica, epilepsy, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), etc. Highlight this information to any new staff/settings.
- Information sharing between settings should include the Child's Plan, up-to-date records from the child's Profile, Developmental Overviews and any targets or recommendations from professionals working with the child.
- For more information please see [EASEYS for ASN Meeting Additional Support Needs](#).

Hints and Tips!

- Work collaboratively with parents/carers and professionals to complete a [Being Me! All About Me](#) document or similar. Write this in the 'child's voice'
- Changes can happen unexpectedly, and things don't always go to plan, so a flexible collaborative approach amongst partners is essential.
- Structural adaptations, acquiring appropriate resources, equipment and training can take time and may require input from specialist services so ensure that you are familiar with The Highland Council guidance on timings.
- Explore the following documents whilst considering the children with support needs in your setting:
 - the [Transition Policy for ELC Settings](#);
 - the Challenge Questions from [HGIOELC](#) (Q1 2.6 Transitions); and
 - the tools within the [Transition Pack from Nursery to Primary](#).