

09 Childcare practice procedures

09.13 Prime times – Transition to school



Moving on to school is a major transition in a child's life involving separation from familiar adults and children. Older children have a more secure understanding of 'people permanence' and are able to approach new experiences with confidence. However, they need preparation if they are to approach transition to school with confidence and an awareness of what to expect.

Partnership with schools

- Details of the school that a child will be attending are recorded in the child's file along with the name of the reception class teacher.
- Every effort is made to forge and maintain strong links with all schools that children may attend. The pre-school manager will approach schools in order to open lines of communication where these have not previously existed.
- Details of the school's transition or settling in procedures are known by the pre-school and are referred to so that members of staff are familiar with them and can develop a consistent approach to transition with teachers, parents/carers and children.
- Teachers are welcomed into the pre-school and sufficient time is made for them to spend both with the child, their parents/carers and with the key person, to discuss and share information that will support the child's transition to school. This is particularly important with SEND children.
- Throughout the summer term the child's key person completes a Little Doves CP 'My Transition to School Passport' (adapted from Essex County Council 'My Transition to School Passport') that details information about the child including their interests, current developmental needs, routines and requirements. This is usually done in consultation with the parent/carer. Once completed this passport is given to the infant school the child is attending.
- Any action plans relating to a child's additional needs are also shared, where this is in place.
- Other formal documentation such as safeguarding information is prepared in line with procedure 07.06 Transfer of records.

Partnership with parents/carers

- Key persons discuss transition to school with parents/carers and set aside time to discuss learning and development summaries. Parents/carers are encouraged to contribute to summaries.
- Key persons discuss with parents/carers how they are preparing their child for school and share information about how the pre-school is working in partnership with the school to aid transition.
- Key persons make clear to parents/carers the information that will be shared with the school, for example, information regarding child protection and work that has taken place to ensure the child's welfare.

Increasing familiarity for children

- If appropriate, the child's keyperson, pre-school SENCO or deputy might accompany the child and family when making a visit to the school, guiding and supporting as appropriate.
- Various aids are used to familiarise the children with their new schools. This may be through videos, photographs or other information about the school that can be shown within the pre-school. Staff may borrow resources from the schools and will use these with the children.

Preparing children for leaving

- Children and parents/carers form bonds with adults and children in the pre-school and will need preparation for separating from the relationships they have formed.
- The children are helped to explore positive ideas about school by positive discussion in focus time, introducing 'school' role play materials, reading stories about starting school, listening and responding to the children and their thoughts in the summer term before they start school. Once a month, on a Friday morning, there is a 'school morning' where the children bring in their PE kits to change into to have a PE session.
- A child's "Big book of me" learning journal is given to the parents/carers when the child leaves the pre-school but they are encouraged to share the information with their child's new teacher.
- On the last day of the summer term a 'Leavers Party' is organised followed by a Leavers Presentation where the children are congratulated, presented with their "Big book of me" learning journal and given a small gift & card. All the pre-school children are invited to attend as well as families, younger siblings and grandparents. In this way the children's time at the pre-school is celebrated and the children are encouraged to embrace the changes ahead. It also gives the children, staff and families a chance to say their "thank you's" and "goodbyes".
- Parents/carers are not be discouraged from bringing the child for the occasional brief visit, as separations often take time to complete. Sometimes children need the reassurance that their pre-school is still there and that they are remembered.