Transition into Reception 2020

Many Schools and Early Years Settings in Cambridgeshire have highly effective and well-established practices to support children with making transitions into the Reception Year of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This guidance has been written to support practitioners with reflecting on existing good practice alongside making adjustments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ready Children

Reflecting on Practice

Positive transitions are vital for young children's well-being and development. Some children will have been in childcare provision from a very young age while others will have much less experience in a group setting.

Transition should be seen as an ongoing process which has been carefully adapted to meet the needs of every child and to support their emotional well-being. This is particularly important for any children with SEND or additional needs and those who may have had a long period without attending a setting.

Children will feel more secure when the setting they are entering has been tailored to meet their needs and interests.

Helpful Strategies

- Create a "countdown to starting school" calendar showing the weeks in advance and noting when key events are taking place.
- Invite each child to create an "All About Me" book or box (provide examples and/or photos to support parents with ideas for this).
- Provide children with a "Starting School" book with photos and key information about the new class. For children with SEND and/or additional needs consider making a personalised starting school book e.g. Welcome Johnny, my name is…
- Arrange visits to school. Some children will find it extremely hard to start in a new setting without a visit to see where they will be attending. Where whole group visits are not possible, consider scheduling opportunities for children to visit individually with a parent to look around. Create and share video tours of the school for all families via the school website.
- Suggest stories to read at home that support with transitions.
- Role play going to school e.g. try on school uniform; pack a lunch box, book bag, PE bag etc.
- Provide ideas for summer home learning activities e.g. create an environmental print treasure hunt in the local environment, make a map of the route to school, sing songs and rhymes, play with numbers, send a postcard to school.

Notes and comments:

Ready Schools

Reflecting on Practice

Planning for transition is crucial and it is helpful to plot out the various parts of the process across the academic year.

Gathering information from previous providers and other relevant professionals will ensure the transition process is as smooth as possible.

Seeking feedback from parents in previous cohorts will support with reflection on which aspects are successful and which could do with further development.

Helpful Strategies

- Maintain close relationships with all feeder settings. Contact feeder settings to discuss information about children prior to transition and plan additional support for any children who might need it. Gather information about learning and development including the characteristics of effective learning. Identify EYPP/PP, SEND and vulnerable children in order to provide the right level of support from the start.
- Add a new page to the school website called “Getting Ready for School” – this will make it easy for new families to find all the relevant information without having to search the website.
- Create a FAQ document on the school website to support parents with the practicalities of starting school e.g. what do we need to bring on the first day?
- Plan a New Parents Meeting. You could share this in many ways including through a live video meeting on Skype or other similar technology, or record yourselves delivering the presentation. Some families who have not had a positive experience with education previously could go on the school website or YouTube channel and you can send a link to new families to watch the recording at home. Provide an email address for parents to submit questions. Consider what specific information is needed for parents of children with SEND and/or additional needs.
- Ensure updated ICP/IEPs and assess/plan/do/review paperwork is shared between professionals with parent/carer permission.

Notes and comments:

Ready Families

Reflecting on Practice

It is vitally important to build positive relationships with parents / carers right from the start. Parents have a wealth of information about their child and are their first and most important educator.

Many parents are very anxious about the transition into Reception. It is important to provide the right amount of support and information so families feel adequately prepared but not overwhelmed.

It is important to consider individual needs rather than adopting a "one size fits all" approach. This is particularly important for any children with SEND or medical needs.

Helpful Strategies

- Arrange home visits to each family when possible. Where this is not possible, calls could be rearranged via Skype (or other similar teachnology) or telephone. Post any paperwork to families in advance so they have copies prior to the visit or call. Initial meetings could alternatively be held on neutral ground, e.g. a local park, to begin to build positive relationships with families who may be anxious.
- Record a series of "Meet the Teacher" videos to share online e.g. read a story and share some information about yourself - What are your hobbies? Do you have any pets? How long have you been working at the school? Try and include all staff who will be working in the EYFS including Teaching Assistants.
- Create a personalised folder of key documents for each new child with clear timescales for items that need to be returned. Provide a stamped addressed envelope to make it easy for parents to post things back to school.
- Signpost families to helpful online resources e.g. https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1
- Arrange TAF meetings with parents / carers and all relevant professionals where required (electronically or on the phone).
- Consider arrangements for a staggered start to school, especially for children with any additional needs.

Notes and comments:

COVID-19: Additional Things to Consider

- **Offer of a School Place** – ensure parents / carers understand how to formally accept an offer of a school place and make contact to support those that have not been able to do this.
- **Learning and Development at Home** – provide a way for parents / carers to share with the school some achievements and learning experiences for their child during their time at home if they would like to (see example on page 7).
- **Transfer of Information** – use video and/or phone communication to ensure all relevant information about children has been shared (with parental permission).
- **Bereavement** – consider the emotional impact on families that may have been directly affected by COVID-19. Link parents / carers to sources of support e.g. https://www.winstonswish.org/.
- **Financial Implications** – many families may have difficulties with affording uniform, book bags etc. at this time. Provide sources of affordable school uniform, consider being more flexible in your initial requirements and look at options for making some kit available free where required.
- **Parental Anxiety** – many parents / carers will be anxious both about the transition itself and the safety of their child. Reassure parents with clear information about the measures being taken to make the school safe and provide a named contact for any parent who has additional questions or concerns.
- **Access to ICT / Internet** – consider how parents without computer and/or internet access will be provided with all the information they need. Phone calls and information posted to a home address may be helpful. Ensure translation of information is provided if required.
- **Staggered Start** – the period of time needed for children to feel secure at the new school may take much longer and need greater flexibility than in previous years. Work in partnership with parents to support children who will need a more gradual introduction to the new environment.
- **Resources** – consider how activities and resources can be tailored to support and nurture children's social and emotional development.

Websites

Practitioners:

- Department for Education
- TTS Group: Managing Transition from nursery to school
- Childcare Education Expo “Ready Schools”
- Ensuring a smooth transition from nursery to school
- Pacey: Spotlight on being school ready
- Nasen: Transition

Parents:

- BBC Bitesize Starting Primary School
- Pacey: Spotlight on being school ready
- Small Talk
- Family Zone
- Nasen: Transition

All about my time at home by _____

Things I've been enjoying at home

New things I can do

Experiences I have had

New behaviours I express

Anything I or my family are worried about: