

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>03</b>
○ Principles of Early Years Transition	07
○ Aims of Guidance	08
<b>Moving On</b>	<b>09</b>
○ <b>Major Life Transitions</b>	11
○ <b>Parents</b>	13
Case Study: Using Parent Information Point Blue Gate Fields Infant School	17
○ <b>Home Visiting</b>	19
Case Study: Transition from Childminder to School Christine Ishmail and Nolly	23
○ <b>Transition from Home to Setting or School</b>	25
Case Study: Transition from Home to Playgroup to Nursery Early Years Inclusion Team Support and Jihad	29
○ <b>Transition from Children’s Centres to Settings or School</b>	31
Case Study: Transition from Children’s Centre to Reception	34
○ <b>Transitions Within Settings/School</b>	37
○ <b>Transitions Throughout the Day</b>	41
Case Study: Transitions Throughout the Day Mudchute Nursery	44
○ <b>Transition from Setting to School</b>	45
Case Study: Transition from Playgroup to School Marion Richardson Primary School and Kaison	48
Case Study: A Multi Agency Approach, Transition from Day Care to Nursery Blue Gate Fields Infants and Yusrah	50
Case Study: Transition from Playgroup to Nursery Lincoln Hall Playgroup	52
Case Study: Transition from Playgroup to School Tate House Playgroup	55
○ <b>Transition from Reception to Year 1</b>	57
Case Study: Transition from Reception to Year 1 Mowlem Primary School	60
○ <b>Children Using Transport Services</b>	63

<b>Activities</b>	<b>67</b>
○ Activities for Children	69
○ Picture Books for Early Years on Transitions, New Experiences and Changes	71
<b>Policy Guidance</b>	<b>73</b>
○ Guidance for Developing a Transition Policy in the Early Years Foundation Stage	75
<b>Directory</b>	<b>79</b>
○ Organisations	81
○ Support Services	84
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>93</b>
○ Guidance for using the All About... Books	
○ All About... Book	
○ All About... Book Kaisan Hoque	
○ Guidance for Using the Diary Case Study: Archie's Diary	
○ Transition Plan	
○ Transition Plan: Nadine Kaur	
○ Acknowledgements	

# Introduction







**Children make many transitions in their lives. Some are 'milestone' transitions such as starting at playgroup or school. Some may even involve a move to this country. Transitions also occur on a daily basis between home, childminders, settings, schools, after school clubs and perhaps children's centre activities. Others may include a change of key person or room within a setting or school. Transitions are an important part of life and offer opportunities for new experiences and personal growth but they may also include feelings of anxiety and uncertainty for children and their families.**

This guidance will help practitioners to further develop their knowledge and understanding of the impact that transitions have on children's wellbeing. It will also provide practitioners with information and practical ways of supporting children's transitions. A vital theme in the guidance is acknowledging the importance of establishing and building links between home and different care and education providers.

The guidance also recognises that observing and listening to children is essential in enabling us to take into account their views, feelings and preferences when planning transitions. Strong relationships with families will help to support them through the transition process. Working in partnership with families enables practitioners to develop an in depth understanding of the individual experiences of transitions for children.



The Early Years Foundation Stage clearly highlights the importance of facilitating smooth transitions in order to foster children's emotional wellbeing and maintain the progression of their learning and development. Well supported transitions contribute to children's personal growth and help develop their self esteem and confidence, their independence and their resilience.

### For further information

For further information please refer to the Early Years Foundation Stage online:

'All About... Transitions' by Anne O'Connor

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs/resources/downloads/3\\_4\\_a.pdf](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs/resources/downloads/3_4_a.pdf)

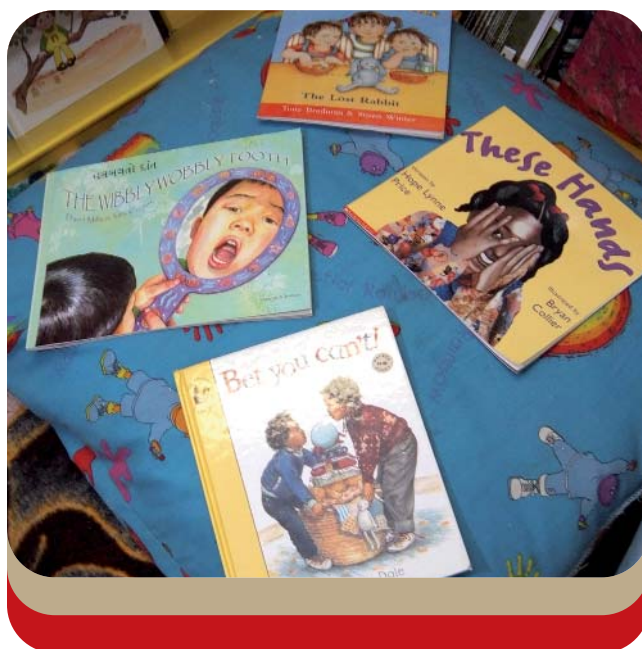
Early Years Transition and Special Educational Needs (EYTSEN Project)

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR431.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR431.pdf)

Contact the Early Years Service for up to date recommendations of useful publications.

Each section in this guidance can be used on its own. Where appropriate, there are references to related sections which provide further information.

The use of 'parents' in this guidance refers to parents and carers. The use of the plural does not imply that a child will necessarily have more than one parent.



# Principles of Early Years Transition

- Children's experiences and memories, views and feelings are respected and responded to.
- Children's individual interests, learning, development and strengths are recognised, valued and built on.
- There are systems and structures in place to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to children's transition. However, the individual child is the starting point for thinking about transition; processes and systems must fit the child and not vice versa.
- Practitioners acknowledge that all children are unique and that their experiences of transition will be individual.
- Parents' knowledge and skills are valued and they are full partners in their children's transition. Parents are supported throughout the process.
- Practitioners have a responsibility to develop knowledge of children's background, culture, religion, home language, strengths and individual needs.
- Schools and settings establish good working relationships to support successful transition for children.





# Aims of Guidance

- To provide guidance that is built upon effective practice, so that practitioners can support successful transitions for all children in the early years.
- To establish a consistent approach to supporting transitions throughout Tower Hamlets.
- To provide materials and tools to support children, parents and practitioners in making transition as positive an experience as possible.



# Moving On







# Major Life Transitions

**As well as making transitions between home and setting/school, for some children this may coincide with other important life transitions. Perhaps a child has recently arrived in the country. This could be part of a private fostering arrangement within their extended family or it may be that their family are refugees or asylum seekers. Other transitions include children from Gypsy, Roma or traveller families who may be temporarily resident in the borough. Other children may have been placed with new foster parents or adoptive parents as a result of major events in the child's life.**



It is important to have as much information as possible and to work in partnership with other agencies that may be supporting the family. Each situation will be unique and children will respond in different ways. However, they may be extremely anxious and fearful about separation from parents or carers. It is important for practitioners to appreciate the added impact on the child's emotional well being that these experiences will have. Practitioners may not have experienced anything so traumatic in their own lives and so it is essential that they make themselves aware of how a child's cognitive, personal, social and emotional development may be affected.

## Ideas for Effective Practice

The good practice suggested in other sections of this guidance will be helpful but, in addition, the following are essential when supporting children who have undergone major life transitions:

- The key person builds a positive and trusting relationship with the family.
- Establish good working partnerships with any agencies supporting the family.
- Make use of organisations with specialist knowledge that relates to the child's circumstances.
- Ensure practitioners have knowledge of the context of the child's transition. Personal history is essential but some awareness of the political/historical context of the situation could also be very helpful.
- It is important to be sensitive to the families' circumstances and to avoid being intrusive. Families may need reassurance when

information is requested and practitioners need to be clear about why it is needed.

- Ensure the child and their family feel welcomed in the setting and that practitioners approach them with warmth and help them to feel safe and cared for.
- For a family who is very new in the country there may be a very different understanding and expectations of the education system.
- Families have differing views on child rearing practices, child development and what might be expected of children. Practitioners need to appreciate the importance of these views to parents when building relationships with families.
- Settling in arrangements will need to be very flexible and time made for the child to develop new attachments.
- A main security for the child will be consistency of relationships and in the environment.
- Plan for supporting the child's communication needs especially when a child is learning English as an additional language and they are used to thinking and processing information in a different language. Use visual prompts to support language and provide regular and consistent routines in order that the child can predict activities rather than having to rely only on verbal information. (For detailed advice see Supporting Children Learning English as an Additional Language Guidance for Practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage.)



# Parents

**Working together with parents in an atmosphere of mutual respect helps children to feel secure and confident through the period of transition. Parents are the most significant people in the child's life and have an in depth knowledge and understanding of their child. Close parental involvement ensures that practitioners can be well informed about individual children, including any issues they may have around transition. A strong partnership also enables parents and practitioners to plan together to support transitions.**



# Ideas for Effective Practice

## Parents Information Session

Invite parents to an information sharing session where they can ask questions and gain information about the ethos, curriculum and how parents are supported and involved in the setting/school. This session would usefully involve established parents in sharing information about the setting/school from their perspective and would also provide prospective parents with opportunities to explore how they would like to be involved.

## Welcome Pack

Provide parents with a Welcome Pack when they visit the setting/school or during a home visit. When compiling a Welcome Pack it would be helpful to invite existing parents to help select and develop materials as they will be able to draw on their own experiences and share ideas about materials that are helpful for new parents. If possible, arrange for these materials to be translated into community languages. A DVD about the setting or school could also be a useful source of information for parents as well as a resource for parents and children to use when talking about transition.

## All About... Books

Invite parents to put together an All About... book with their child to include photographs of family and home, child's previous experiences and interests, likes and dislikes, and what they would like you to know about their child. Ensure planning is responsive to the information provided in the All About... books and takes into account the interests, needs and concerns of the child. (See All About... Books: Information for Practitioners.)





## **Additional Needs**

Be sensitive to the particular needs of parents who have a child with additional needs. They may be dealing with a range of concerns and demands in relation to their child. Parents may feel anxious about how their child will be received by others as well as settling and support arrangements. (See Supporting Transitions from Home to Setting or School section and Transition Plan form and Example for detailed information.)

## **Key Person**

The key person has an important role in developing a positive and supportive relationship with parents and helping their child to feel secure and confident in the setting/school. (See Supporting Transition from Home to Setting or School section for advice on planning for children with additional needs.)

## **Home Visiting**

Offer a home visit in preparation for the child to transfer into the setting/school. This should include opportunities for parents to share and resolve concerns and alleviate anxieties. (See Developing Home Visit Practice section for detailed advice.)

## **Awareness and Understanding of Practitioners**

Practitioners need to be aware of, and sensitive to, cultural, family and individual diversity of children. For example, child rearing practices vary and parents may spoon or hand feed their children until the time they come to school. Children will need time to get used to different ways of doing things and parents may need to be reassured that practitioners welcome this diversity.

## **Admission and Settling Arrangements**

When setting admission dates consider the individual needs of children and their families. For example, working parents need adequate notice to book leave to settle their child. Involve nannies, childminders and other carers as appropriate. Stagger admission dates and provide flexible settling in programmes.

## **English as an Additional Language**

Consider interpreting needs of parents and be sensitive to their wishes ensuring that this is a genuine choice for the parents. Where parents would like to use an interpreter, make sure that there is adequate time for the discussion. Whenever possible, use a staff member; however, if this is not possible, ensure that the interpreter is aware of the need for confidentiality and sensitivity to the parents' views and information shared. Parents who do not wish to use an interpreter may find it useful to have visual information to support what is said such as a photographic outline of routines and events or a DVD about the setting/school. Where possible, arrange for parent information to be translated into community languages.

## **Parents' Views**

Find out parents' views through informal discussion, a suggestion box, or develop a parent questionnaire to gain information on the experience of transition and suggestions for improving practice.



## **Buddying**

Set up a buddying system for more isolated parents who may appreciate the support of another parent in getting to know and understand the systems of the setting/school and their approach to settling in. They may help them to gain confidence in contributing to the transition process and in offering their knowledge of their child to ensure the best possible experience.

## **Open Door**

When children are settling, encourage parents to take time to be with their child in the new environment and to join in the activities their child chooses. Build in opportunities for parents to be involved and to carry out activities. Have regular informal time to talk to parents to share information and make sure parents know how they can contact you if they need to discuss any issues.

## **Notice Boards**

Develop a photograph board identifying all staff members and their roles. Maintain an up to date parents' information notice board. This could contain "Our Local Settings/Schools" (names)

and photographs as well as information for parents about their local children's centre, toy library, stay and play sessions, parent and toddler sessions, local childminding network and extended day care for working parents. During the lead up to transition, settings could display (with parental agreement) photographs of children and the school they will be going to in order to support links between children who will be transferring to the same school.

## **Events**

Invite parents and children in local settings to school events such as fairs, fun days, concerts and celebrations so that families can get to know schools during informal events.

## **Setting/School Visits**

Invite parents and children to visit the setting or school so that they can become familiar with the environment and some routines. Offer a book of photographs of practitioners and the environment as a reference for discussion and anticipation at home.



## Case Study

# Using Parent Information Point

## Blue Gate Fields Infant School

In close liaison with Parent Information Point (PIP), Blue Gate Fields Infant School early years teachers have worked hard and successfully to improve the support they give to both parents and children making transitions in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the first year, the school started by asking PIP to help review current practice. The next year, PIP attended new parents' meetings and was on hand to provide extra information to parents.

One of the most successful outcomes of this support was the development of a different way of organising transition meetings for new parents. These were designed as a series of small group discussions, rather than a teacher talking to a large group of parents where some people might find it difficult to contribute. Each group was given some cards with conversation starters on them and a translator. The parents were helped to feed back some of the results of their discussions about their child's transition (including questions and concerns) to the whole group.

Through evaluative discussions with PIP, Year 1 teachers, the Early Years Foundation Stage Coordinator and Transition Coordinator decided to plan and implement many other new ideas to make transitions through the school a happier experience. For example, on the children's first day at nursery, they decided to give them a special pack of equipment (scissors, paper, glue and crayons) to provide things at home that are used at school. It was hoped that this would help them make connections between home and school and support parents to learn with their children at home. All children were also given a water bottle and book bag to encourage them to start bringing them into school every day and to help make their first day so exciting that they were keen to return. The families of new nursery children were also given a DVD of a typical school day to help them visualise what to expect and to understand the purpose of certain activities.



Transition from Reception to Year 1 was examined carefully and the following changes were made to ease transition for the children and their families:

- In the summer term of Reception, parents were invited to visit the new Year 1 class along with their children to paint a picture together. These pictures were then displayed in their new classroom in September to make the children feel at home and valued. Children also visited their new classes with the rest of their classmates, current teacher and future teacher, as they had in the past. Children were also given a laminated reminder sheet telling them the name of their new teacher, new class, P.E. days and what they needed to bring to school such as P.E. kit and book bags. A Key Stage 1 information booklet was updated and given to parents.
- Independent activities were provided at all times in the Year 1 classrooms to continue to encourage children to make choices, and this helped maintain curriculum continuity. Furthermore, every opportunity was taken, particularly in the afternoons, to use the outdoor spaces to access all areas of the curriculum and to continue to provide opportunities to learn through play.

*'Focussing on the children's previous experiences and interests helped them engage better.'*

**Year 1 teacher**

*'I like Year 1 because I like everything. It feels like home, especially the home corner.'*

**Year 1 pupil**

- In the first few weeks, doors between Year 1 classes were left open in the afternoons to allow pupils to continue seeing old friends.

*'I like Year 1 because I get to play with my new and old friends.'*

**Year 1 pupil**

*'Allowing children to move freely within the three classrooms in the afternoon seemed to make them feel more comfortable and relaxed than last year.'*

**Class teaching assistant**

- Parents' needs were addressed by encouraging them to take what extra time they needed to drop off their children in the mornings. Moreover, parent conferences were scheduled to take place earlier than usual; in the first two - three weeks of the autumn term. This was highly valued by both teachers and parents and helped alleviate stress.
- Finally, both children and teachers were consulted about how the transition process had gone in a whole class group discussion early in the autumn term and individual responses were noted and evaluated.



# Home Visiting

**It is important to work closely with parents even before their child starts at a setting or school. This helps to create a strong foundation for successful transition, either from home to setting, or to school. Home visiting enables parents, children and practitioners to start to build a relationship in an environment where the child is likely to feel most secure and confident. The key person has a vital role in home visiting and enables them to gather important information from those who are most knowledgeable about the child. Home visiting provides an opportunity for parents to gain information about the setting/school, share concerns and feel supported. It also enables practitioners and parents to plan together to support the child's transition.**

# Ideas for Effective Practice

## Before the Visit

### Parents' Privacy

Offer a home visit, making it clear that parents are under no obligation and that their decision will be respected. Suggest an alternative, for example an informal meeting in the setting/school.

### Preparation and Approach

Make sure the family knows who to expect and arrange an interpreter if needed. Consider the translation needs of parents. (See Parents section for more detailed information on meeting parent's interpreting needs).

### Cultural Sensitivity

Be sensitive to cultural practices, for example in some homes it would be appropriate to remove shoes on arrival.

### Practitioners' Safety

Visit with a colleague to ensure safety. One of those visiting should be the key person. Paired visits have the added advantage of enabling one practitioner to focus on the parent and the other on the child. Bring books and toys to engage the child.



## During the Visit

### Approach

Be friendly and relaxed, making sure the visit is an enjoyable experience. It is important that the parents feel confident and fully understand the purpose of your visit.

### Discuss the Setting/School

Talk about the routines and procedures in your setting or school. Discuss how you support children's learning and development, stressing the importance of play. Give parents an idea of what would be involved in a typical session. Explore and address any concerns parents may have about the transition for their child.

### Welcome Pack

Include information for parents including relevant policies such as a Transition Policy and Inclusion Policy. Also provide information on parental involvement and a book about starting at the setting/school for the child (dual language if appropriate). The pack could also include information about services for families, for example those provided through the local children's centre and extended day care for working parents.



## Gathering information about the Child

The home visit can be a convenient time to gather admission information. It is easier for parents to find the information needed at home, especially if you have alerted them in advance. Other useful information to support transition and planning for the child might include:

- important people and events in their child's life
- interests, likes and dislikes
- any key experiences outside home, for example going to a childminder, hospitalisation, attending children's centre activities and parent and toddler group
- child's daily routines
- individual needs and what helps to support their child, for example ways of helping their child to be comforted when upset
- any worries, fears and frustrations that their child may have and what helps them to feel secure and confident
- information around health, feeding and dietary needs, sleeping patterns and toileting support needed
- how their child communicates and ways of helping their child understand what is said, for example gestures, props
- fluency in home language/s and/or English and sample of words their child is using
- information on additional needs and agencies involved
- introduce the All About... book and invite parents to complete this with their child. (See All About... Books: Information for Practitioners for detailed guidance.)

## Transition Arrangements

Agree a plan for transition, for example:

- arrange for the child and parent to make an initial visit to the setting or school
- for children with additional needs ensure a Transition Plan meeting is held and that any new information is used in planning. (See Supporting Transition from Home to Setting or School section and Transition Plan form and Example for further information)
- discuss who the key person is and how they will help support the child and parent during transition
- agree on a flexible settling in arrangement
- discuss what the parent's role will be during this period
- plan for parent's interpreting needs. (See Parents section for details.)
- if there is a childminder involved, discuss how best to make links and how they will be involved in the transition process.



## Practical Activities

- Story home visits – take a book and props to share with the child.
- Take photographs of the visit (with parental permission) to mark the occasion and use these to help recall the event when the child begins at the setting/school.
- Provide 'setting/school box' – develop a box of photos of the practitioner, of different areas in the setting/school and of everyday routines. Leave this with the child. It can then be used to bring in an item from home on the first day, such as a favourite book or toy.
- Lend the child a book about starting at the setting/school which contains photographs of practitioners and different areas and activities that will be available.
- Make a recording (DVD) of the setting/school to lend to the family. This will provide a valuable focus for discussion between the child and family members and will help the child familiarise themselves with their new placement.



## Case Study

# Transition from Childminder to School

## Christine Ishmail and Nolly

Christine Ishmail has been childminding in Poplar for six years now and was described as offering 'outstanding' provision for children after an Ofsted inspection.

### Photo Books

'Nolly's been coming to us since she was nine months old as both her parents work full time', explain childminders Christine and Bernard Martin, in their friendly home, which proudly displays children's artwork and creations. 'She is now five and attending the local school, St Saviours. Nolly has global learning difficulties and mostly communicates using gestures and signing. As a result, it has proved very important to use photos to build up her vocabulary and to help her understand what is happening next. With all the children we childmind, we make an All About... photo book as soon as they start coming to us. They love to look through it and talk to us about their family.'



### Link Book

Christine explains: 'We write in a link book every day in order to develop good links between her different settings, which is particularly important considering Nolly's communication difficulties. It is an ordinary spiral bound notebook beautifully decorated with Nolly's name on it to show her how important it is. We write down any significant events or particular needs she may have. This has really helped family, school and childminders to keep in touch with each other and talk to Nolly about her experiences. When it is time to move on to school we begin to prepare the children for the transition by making a photo book all about the routines in the school they are going to. For example, we take photos of the playground, where they will hang their coat and find the toilets.'



## Comforters

Christine advises: 'When settling a young child into a new environment, encourage adults to let the children take along a favourite and familiar toy for security and comfort. Never leave without saying goodbye and remember it is very important to tell them you will be back soon.'

## Collaboration

Christine concludes: 'We try to prepare all children for starting school by familiarising them with some of the routines they may experience in school such as sitting down as a group for story time and eating with other children at a table. When Nolly first went to school, I also stayed with her until 10 o'clock every day introducing her to different activities and people. Once she had got to know her teaching assistant, I made a game out of looking for her each morning and made a big fuss of her to help distract Nolly from any anxieties she may have been experiencing. From the beginning, the teaching assistant used a familiar activity (changing her) to start off the day. This helped settle her. Before, and after, Nolly first started school we had three monthly transition meetings with school staff and all the outside agencies working with her, to plan and prepare for her particular needs. As a result, her progress was watched through discussion and setting targets. Also, funding was secured to provide her with an adapted bike and to install a suitable changing area near to the Reception class. This close collaboration helped address everyone's concerns about Nolly's transition to school very well.'





# Transition from Home to Setting or School

**The transition from home is one of the most important transitions for the young child and ensuring that they feel secure and supported during this time is essential. Developing a positive relationship with parents from the beginning is essential for children's successful transition. Building a strong partnership will support children's learning and development throughout their time in the setting/school and beyond.**





## Ideas for Effective Practice

### Key Person

Allocate a key person before the child begins in the setting or school. This will help to ensure that the child and family are well supported through the transition. A second key person needs to be introduced in case the main key person is absent.

### Home Visits

Arrange for the key person to home visit to gain information about the child and share information about the setting/school. Home visits are most effective when they provide opportunities for parents to share and resolve concerns and alleviate anxieties. (See Developing Home Visit Practice section for detailed advice.)

### All About... Books

Invite parents to put together an All About... book with their child to include photographs of family and home, the child's previous experiences and interests, likes and dislikes and what they would like you to know about their child. Ensure planning is responsive to the information provided in the All About... books and takes into account the interests, needs and concerns of the child. (See All About... Books: Information for Practitioners for detailed guidance.)

### Children's Experience

Find out information from parents about their child's and family's experience of the transition into the setting/school and their suggestions for improvement. This can be done informally through discussion and/or use of a suggestion box, or more formally, through questionnaires. Children's views can also be gained through group or individual discussions with the children. Evaluate this information and use it to plan transitions throughout and for future transitions.

### Visits to the Setting or School

Make times for parents and their children to visit so they can become familiar with the environment and some of the routines. Offer a booklet of photos as a reference for discussion and anticipation at home.

### Making All Children Feel 'At Home'

Ensure that resources and activities reflect cultural, family and individual diversity so that children will see themselves and their own lives represented in the setting/school.

### Additional Needs

- For children with additional needs, organise a Transition Plan meeting with the parents and relevant agencies including childminder if appropriate. (See Transition Plan form and Example.)



- Consider any training requirements. For example, training to support children who are visibly different - training and support in this area are available from Changing Faces. (See Organisations and Support Services section for details.)
- If the family is using the Family File from the Early Support materials, record information about your visit and contact details in the Family Service Plan. (See Organisations and Support Services section for further information on Early Support.)
- Develop a Health Care Plan for children with specific health and medical needs with the parent and appropriate agencies.
- Admit children with complex needs at the earliest opportunity in order that they can settle into a small group and all staff can become familiar with their needs.
- Provide information about any relevant support services or organisations that may be helpful. (See Organisations and Support Services section for detailed information.)
- Offer parents a follow up meeting after a few weeks to review how their child has settled and continue the process of planning for the child's needs.
- Consider how supply teachers and students will be informed of the child's needs, for example a brief profile of the child made available which could include the child's individual needs, support approaches, routines, equipment used, Health Care Plan if appropriate.

### Information Sharing

Invite parents to an information sharing session and provide a Welcome Pack. (See Parent section for detailed advice.)



### Interpreting and Translation

Consider interpreting needs of parents and be aware of confidentiality issues when using interpreters. (See Parents section for further information.) Where possible, arrange for information to be available in community languages.

### Settling Arrangements and Admissions

- Provide flexible settling in programmes. This could include introducing the child to progressively longer sessions which cover different times of the day.





- With younger children, take the opportunity to observe parents caring for their child so you can find out how they like to be changed, settled to sleep, fed and comforted.
- When setting admission dates, consider the individual needs of children and their families, for example working parents needing adequate notice to book leave to settle their child. Stagger admission and consider settling children with additional needs during the earlier intake.

### **Involving Other Carers**

Grandparents, other relatives and childminders may already be involved in the child's care. It will be important to think of ways that they might be included in their transition.

### **Transition Policy**

In your Transition Policy, make specific reference to your practice in supporting children's transition from home. (See Transition Policy section for guidance.)

### **Links with Children's Centres**

Establish and strengthen links with local children's centres who will be supporting parents and the children with transitions and work in collaboration with them. For example, children's centres might arrange an event for EYFS practitioners to meet parents and share information about their settings and schools.



## Case Study

# Transition from Home to Playgroup to Nursery

## Early Years Inclusion Team Support and Jihad

Jihad is a bubbly, sociable and very caring little boy who is very playful and loves a joke. He is five years old and has Down Syndrome. He is the youngest child of a Bangladeshi family. Jihad likes messy play and is very protective to his younger friends and family. His greatest area of need is communication and he finds it difficult to express every day needs such as hunger. He can use two words together and also uses lots of gestures. Jihad needs help with eating, dressing and toileting.

The Early Intervention Support Worker, who is a Bengali speaker, was first introduced to the family by the Child Development Team to help them explore an early years setting for Jihad.



First, a home visit was made to ascertain what help the family wanted. Shiria, Jihad's mother, wanted information about local under fives playgroup provision. Shiria was encouraged to take Jihad to an inclusive soft play session.

For the first few times, the Early Intervention Support Worker accompanied Shiria and Jihad to help them settle in by introducing them to

another family. Jihad thoroughly enjoyed his visits and was eager to have further play opportunities. Visits were, therefore, arranged for

morning sessions at Rainbow Playgroup and, again, Shiria and Jihad were accompanied on the first few visits until they felt settled. Later, it was decided that Jihad was ready to attend a day nursery. Preparations began for him to start part time day care at George Green Nursery.



A transition planning meeting was organised by the Early Intervention Support Worker and attended by Jihad's parent, an Inclusion Coordinator, Educational Psychologist, Portage Home Visitor and a Parents Centre Advisor. At around this time, a request was made to the Special Educational Needs Section for Jihad to have a Statutory Assessment. He subsequently received a Statement of Special Educational Needs and was allocated additional support. Jihad settled well into the nursery.



Shiria recalls: 'Going to playgroup before settling to the nursery and getting Rojina's [Early Intervention Support Worker] help really made a difference and helped Jihad settle very easily. At the beginning, I really didn't realise how much help my son would need. The support I got from Portage and the Parents Advice Centre was also most helpful.'

When Jihad arrived at Harbinger School, he was given a pack of resources to take home. Jihad's sisters liked the fact that he got this 'just like all the other children' and felt this helped him be excited about going to school. The family also valued both the photographs of his new setting and the extra opportunities he was given to visit school as this helped him understand where he was going next.

The family recalls that their greatest worry when Jihad first started school was that: 'The staff would not realise that he needed more encouragement than the average child does to eat and express his needs. We were worried that if he was hungry he would then not learn as much. We have most valued him being supported by a teaching assistant who has training in developing his speech and language skills so he can begin to express his needs.'

Jihad is now happily settled at school.





# Transition from Children's Centres to Settings or School

**Establishing effective links between children's centres and settings and schools is important for supporting children and families during the transition process. Strong links enable practitioners to gather important information about the child and family and help develop relationships and ensure continued positive outcomes for them.**



**Children's centres may have worked closely with children and families for a number of years and they will have knowledge of children, their strengths and needs, interests, likes and dislikes.**

Children's centres develop partnerships with their local school and identified day care which will support the transition process.

Transition to a new a setting or school can be a very anxious time for both parents and children. Children's centres are developing transition programmes involving a range of agencies.



## Ideas for Effective Practice

### Developing Relationships

- Establish links between local children's centres, settings and schools and have an information board outlining local provision for parents.
- Develop relationships with staff at the children's centre to enable ongoing, joint working and support for children and families in your area.
- Arrange a time to visit the children's centre to find out information about the range of services available for families. Discuss with parents of children joining your setting/school the services they have used at children's centres and the impact these have had.
- Consider linking with children's centres throughout the year to bring EYFS practitioners together to discuss provision for under fives in your area, sharing experiences, expertise and ideas.
- Signpost families to children's centre transition programmes. Work with the local children's centre to develop a targeted programme that addresses identified needs for children in a particular setting or school.

### Transition Programmes

Run workshops for parents as part of transition programmes at children's centres. For example:

- Healthy Packed Lunches and Healthy Lifestyles (with the children's centre dietician)
- Oral Health promotion and screening



- Stay and Play sessions at the children's centres targeted at children moving on to a particular school or setting which provide opportunities for children, parents and staff from both settings to meet in a more informal environment.
- Transition in to Nursery/Reception
- Managing minor ailments
- Speech and language development workshops and screening, run by the Speech and Language Therapist
- Positive Attention and Praising Children, run by children's centre Education Psychologist
- Paediatric Basic Life Support Training – (certified basic first aid course for parents)
- Potty training

### **All About... Books**

Discuss the contents of the All About... book with the children's centre and encourage/enable them to contribute towards these. Arrange for the key person to contact the children's centre where the child is registered and discuss All About... books and opportunities for the children's centre to support parents in putting together a book for their child as part of stay and play and/or targeted sessions.

### **Home Visits**

Many families will have built strong relationships with the children's centre staff and will have worked closely with them over a period of time. Families may feel more confident and secure in engaging with new practitioners alongside those whom they trust and feel supported by. Home visits alongside Family Support Workers can provide good opportunities to share and resolve concerns and alleviate anxieties about making the transition into a setting or school. This is especially important for children with additional needs who may require detailed planning for their transition. This contact can be particularly

supportive for parents who may have significant concerns about their child's transition.

Consider undertaking joint home visits with Family Support Workers to families on the family support caseload. These need to be set up with parental consent. These joint visits can be used to share information about the support provided to the family to date, any ongoing support from the children's centre and to agree any additional support that can be provided by the setting/school.

Meetings with the child and family at the children's centre can provide an alternative for parents who choose not to take up the offer of a home visit but would like to meet at another setting. These meetings could also take place in addition to home visits.

### **Information Sharing**

Take opportunities to meet with EYFS practitioners at the children's centre to:

- share information about the child and family
- share knowledge of the needs of children at the setting/school to inform planning and development to meet the needs of families at the children's centre.

Arrange handover meetings with the Family Support Team and other children's centre staff.

### **Observations**

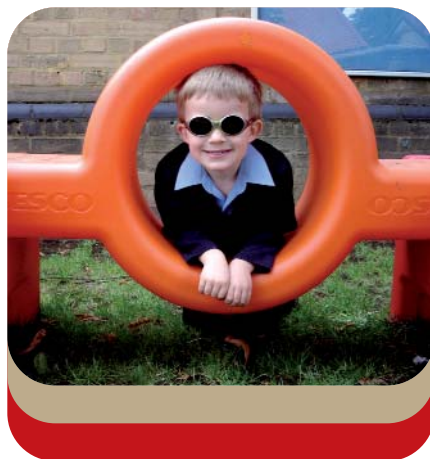
Take opportunities to undertake observations of children at children's centre sessions. This can also provide the opportunity to discuss the child with other professionals who have been working with them. Take the opportunity to discuss the child and review observations that have been made by staff at the children's centre.

# Case Study

## Transition from Children's Centre to Reception

### John Smith Children's Centre

Bailey is a very bright and endearing five year old boy who has been visually impaired since birth. He loves reading, using the computer and playing with his sister, Jessie. He first attended an early years setting, John Smith's Children's Centre, when he was nearly two and stayed there until he was four and a half. During this time, Bailey had a Statutory Assessment of his needs and a Statement completed. He also had the first Annual Review of his Statement while he attended the children's centre. Bailey was clearly very happy in the setting and made friends with many adults and children.



When it came to his first day at St Elizabeth's School, Bailey remembers: 'I felt sad. I didn't want to leave my friends. I felt a bit scared cos I didn't know my friends. We holded a tigger toy to say our names to the class. Me and Valentina played Spongebob. She was my first friend. I had snack with her. I wished I could swing on the ropes on the climbing frame.'

Now Bailey sees school life differently.

'I'm not scared on the climbing frame anymore. I get my own lunch and have to tell them what I want.'

Stacey, Bailey's mother, reflects on Bailey's transition from children's centre to school: 'I didn't realise how many people needed to know about Bailey until the children's centre arranged the meeting four weeks before starting at St Elizabeth's.'

'My biggest worry was that I wanted Bailey to be as independent as possible but he had to get used to playing in a playground with 60 children in it, coming from a small playground of about 20 children. I also worried about him making friends, as he wasn't moving on with anyone he knew. Leading up to the move, Bailey's key person and I took him along to St Elizabeth's to get him used to it. It was really useful but it would have been good to go a few more times. As it turned out, he settled fine with the occasional reluctance to go to school when the novelty wore off, just like many other children.'



Practitioners at John Smith carefully consider the needs of individual children and those of their significant adults. In line with this, they first held a multi professional transition meeting with all those involved in working with Bailey including his parents, current and future setting practitioners and Inclusion Coordinators. At this meeting, specific arrangements were made for practitioners from Bailey's new school to visit the children's centre and also for Bailey, his parents and key person to visit his new school together. In this way, Bailey's parents and key person were able to support him and give him the same positive messages about school. These visits were also useful in assessing whether any adaptations needed to be made to the building in order to accommodate his needs and were made in conjunction with advice from a Visual Impairment Mobility Officer. In addition, photos were taken of Bailey's new school and made into a book to share with his family and with his friends at the children's centre before starting school.

The key person passed on all Bailey's early learning development records and an All About... book as well as other evidence of Bailey's learning to show his future teacher. This was to ensure that staff would have accurate information about Bailey's strengths and interests to enable them to plan appropriately for his learning and development. Training needs of practitioners were also planned for well in advance and training was provided to the whole team by the Visual Impairment Advisory Teacher. As a result, Bailey settled well and is making excellent progress in the new setting.







# Transitions Within Settings/School

**Transitions within settings/schools are critical times for the child and have an impact on their emotional development. Maintaining continuity and stability during these times is essential in ensuring the child's emotional wellbeing and progression in their learning and development. Close parental involvement ensures that practitioners can be well informed about children and any particular issues around transitions for individuals. It provides opportunities to plan together to make sure transitions are well supported.**

**Separate guidance for supporting transition from Reception to Year 1 is also included in this pack.**

## Ideas for Effective Practice

### **Children's Experience**

As with all kinds of transitions it is important to see into children's experiences, both through discussion with them and their parents and through observations. The children are the real experts in their own lives! This information needs to be continually evaluated so that the transition process can be improved for current and future children.

### **Additional Needs**

Ensure practitioners in the next room have adequate information, planning time and appropriate training to support children with additional needs, before the transition, in order that there are no 'gaps' in provision. Arrange visits for the child, with their friends, to new room/class. This will help the child become familiar with the environment and where things are located. (See Supporting Transitions from Home to Setting or School section for further information on planning for additional needs.)

### **Involving Parents and Significant Carers**

Ensure parents and childminders/nannies are involved in the process by talking through what is going to happen and gathering information from them. Let parents have photographs of the new room and practitioners so that they can talk to their child at home about what is going to happen.



### **Key Person**

Make time for the child's outgoing and incoming key persons to share information. The key person in the next room/class visits the child a number of times before the child moves rooms, preferably over a period of at least a few weeks. It is vital that the new key person spends enough time with the child to establish a relationship and spends time observing the child in their familiar environment before the transition is made.



## Diaries

The child's Diary will provide a wealth of information about the child's interests and experiences at home, with the childminder, in the setting/school and after school club. (See Guidance for Using the Diary for detailed information.)

## Friendship Groups

Think about friendship groups. Plan for children to transfer with their friends.

## Providing Security and Comfort

For young children, have a 'cosy corner' with toys, other objects and photographs from their previous room where they can spend time when they choose. Their key person can support them and use these items as references for talking about change experienced by the child and their feelings.

## Talking About Change

Have photographs of the next key person, the children and the room to refer to before the transition. Provide a photograph of the staff in their next room that they can take home to show their parents.

## Links Between Rooms

Where children are separated into rooms in different age groups, make sure there are lots of opportunities to visit each other and share activities. Consider activities to help the child make a link to their new room, for example painting a picture for display in their next room.

## Continuity

Ensure that routines and environments are continuous. There may be changes but these can be introduced over time. For example, a Year 1 classroom should be familiar to children who have transferred from the reception class, and will initially be set up in a similar way. However, over the year the room will be gradually adapted as the children mature.







# Transitions Throughout the Day

**A child may have to make a number of transitions throughout the day; from home to childminder to setting or from home to breakfast club to school. Sharing information between adults who are caring for the child in these different environments can make it easier for the child to cope with the changes during the day. A child may become unsettled and anxious as the time for a transition approaches and it is important that this is addressed in order to maintain their emotional well being.**



# Ideas for Effective Practice

## Children's Experience

Use different ways of listening to the child to see into their experiences of different times of the day. The perspectives of a number of adults will be useful in drawing out issues or concerns that are consistent throughout, or in highlighting those associated with a particular place/context.

## Using Children's Diaries

Use the child's Diary to include experiences from all parts of their day. (See Guidance for Using the Diary for detailed information.)

## Particular Times of the Day

Use different ways of listening to the child to try to understand their experience of specific times of transition. For example, observations and discussions with children may show that lunchtime can be a time of anxiety for children, particularly if they have to eat in a large, noisy hall or they do not like the food.

## Key Person

The key person needs to be aware of the different parts of a child's day. They need to make time to link with other adults involved in all of children's daily experiences and collate and share information, for example who is coming to collect them.





### **Sharing Information**

Make time for specific adults involved at each transition to talk and share information. (Sharing experiences recorded in the Diary could be a good focus for these discussions.)

### **Visual References to Parts of the Day**

Have displays/photographs of each other's settings so that, for example, in the classroom there is a reference for discussion of after school club. Photographs of the classrooms/practitioners from the school or setting displayed in the after school club would provide a similar reference for discussion.

### **Visual Timetables and Use of Symbols**

Use visual timetables which include different parts of the child's day, not just their settling routine. Symbols representing different routines, activities and choices may be appropriate for some children.

### **Significant Adults**

As well as the child's family include references to childminders and other carers during topics such as 'All About Me'.

### **Invitations to Events**

Extend invitations to events to other carers such as childminders, grandparents and other family members.

### **Building Relationships**

Build relationships between staff at breakfast/after school clubs and practitioners. Organise joint training sessions where appropriate, for example training on using children's Diaries.

# Case Study

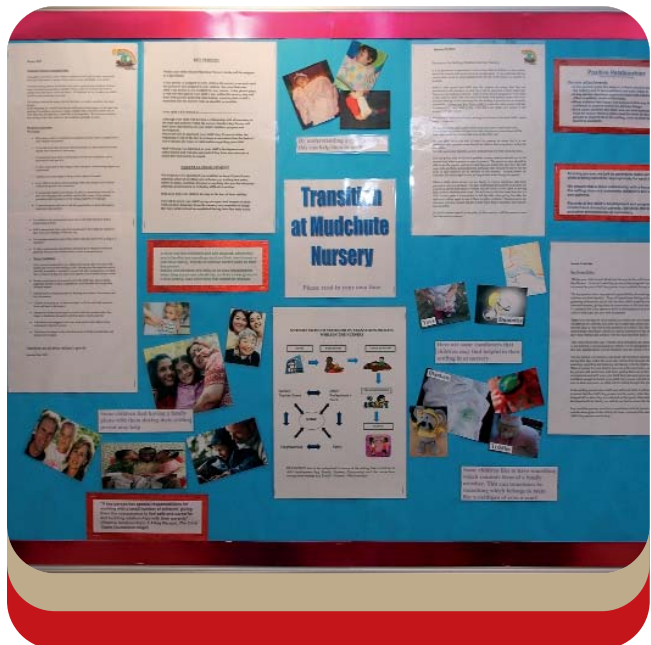
## Transitions Throughout the Day

### Mudchute Nursery

Mudchute Nursery is set in the middle of the Isle of Dogs in east London, right next door to a city farm. It is set in a beautiful light building ideally suited to encouraging smooth transfers throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have baby rooms from three months up to two years, a toddler room for two to three year olds and a preschool room as well as a facility for an after school club.

The children all get to know each other by eating breakfast together first thing in the morning and having tea together at the end of the day. The after school club children are included in this and were often at the nursery themselves in the past so can see old friends. This way, younger children get used to being around older children within a safe setting. Furthermore, only a low fence separates the outdoor play areas for different age groups and so the children can see each other easily and frequently. There is a lot of movement between play areas to help the children get used to the other areas well before they progress to the rooms for older children.

Children are settled in at their own pace and parents stay with their children until they feel they are ready to be left. All children have a key person assigned to them to help them settle. Children are given a special Daily Diary which they keep at nursery most of the time but also take home. The children themselves choose what to include, which could be a painting, bus ticket, photo or whatever they like. These are purposely displayed within easy reach of the children so



that they are looked at and added to regularly. Mudchute have found these books have encouraged a lot of talk and provided a focus for key workers and parents alike, when they are talking and playing with the children.

In addition to the Diaries, the staff have made a colourful, parents' display board in the entrance corridor. This informs them about the process of transitions throughout the nursery and beyond. It also explains how the Mudchute staff support families during transitions.





# Transition from Setting to School

**Establishing and building links between settings and schools is an important foundation for supporting smooth transitions. Leaving the early years setting and beginning school is a major milestone in the life of the young child and strong links between the setting and the school help ensure that this is a positive and well supported experience for the child.**

# Ideas for Effective Practice

## Children's Experience

As with all kinds of transitions it is important to see into children's experiences, through discussion with them and with their parents, and also through observations. The children are the real experts in their own lives. The information gained needs to be continually evaluated so that the transition process can be improved for current and future children.

## Additional Needs

For children with additional needs, organise a Transition Plan meeting to share information and agree actions needed to support the child. Plan any training required by staff to support specific needs and any equipment required in advance of the child starting at school. (See Supporting Transitions from Home to Setting or School section and Transition Plan form and example for further information.)

## Parents' Views

Gain parents' views through informal discussion, suggestion box, or develop a parent questionnaire to gain information on the experience of transition and suggestions for improving practice.

## Key Person

Maintain links between past and present key person to share information about specific transitions and developing practice.

## Developing Contact

Contact local and link settings/schools to explore and plan visits and joint activities. Organise introductory visits to meet staff and get to know each others' establishments. Even if you only

have one or two children coming from a particular setting or going on to a particular school it is important to develop links so that you can support the transition of all individual children.

## Staff Liaison

Arrange meetings between setting and school to discuss transition of cohort of children and possible friendship groupings. This would also provide an opportunity to share the All About... books and ensure that planning is responsive to the information available in the books in relation to the children's interests, relationships, needs and concerns. Agree how and when other information about the children's learning and development is transferred.

## Visits to Settings

Relevant school staff visit children in setting before transition and join in activities, for example read a story. These visits could also be used to observe children who are going to transfer, particularly those who might find the transition difficult.

## Visits to School

Arrange for setting practitioners to visit the new school with parents and children and take photographs of key staff, areas and activities of interest to the child to stimulate discussion back in the setting. Involve childminders and other carers such as grandparents in these visits. Arrange follow up visits once the child has settled in school.

## Admission and Settling Arrangements

Offer flexible staggered admission that enables children who have come from a particular setting or friendship group to settle in together.



## Buddying

Establish a 'Buddy' system with older children in the setting who will have particular skills in helping new children to feel included and valued.

## Reassurance from Children Who Have Already Made the Transition

Arrange for children who have made the transition to a particular school to visit their previous setting with some photographs to show and talk about their new environment.



## Transition Policy

Develop a Transition Policy which includes information on how you link with settings/schools. (See Guidance for developing a Transition Policy section.)

## Joint Training

Regular joint training such as; Effective Transitions, Early Years Foundation Stage, The Role of the Key person and training on meeting specific needs of children, for example supporting children with muscular dystrophy.



## Photographs

Display photographs of local and link settings/school for parents' information.

## Events and Outings

Invite staff from other settings/schools, children and their parents, childminders and other carers to your events, for example fairs, celebrations and fun days. Display information about these events on parents' notice board, as well as discussing them informally with families. Organise joint outings or opportunities to meet up in local venues such as parks and children's centres.





# Case Study

## Transitions from Playgroup to School

### Marion Richardson Primary School and Kaisan

Kaisan is a Reception class pupil at Marian Richardson Primary school in Limehouse. He is a quiet, happy little boy who does not like change and finds it difficult to be independent and interact with his peers. He is the first of two children and is a fantastic artist. He likes reading books and watching cartoons. His favourite toy is Mickey Mouse.

Before starting Reception, Kaisan had experienced quite a few changes. He first left his mother's side when he started at Wapping Playgroup aged two and a half years old. Ruhena, his mum, remembers well how much she valued the staff's flexible attitude to settling children. She liked the way they 'treated children equally, according to their individual needs.' Ruhena particularly liked the way they allowed her to stay with him for his first week and then asked her to start leaving him for short periods of time, giving him a sticker when she returned.

Later, the family moved out of the borough and so he started a new playgroup for two and a half months, which he found hard to settle into. The family returned to Tower Hamlets again and he went back to Wapping Playgroup and settled back to the familiar routine very easily.



'Before he started school I was so worried all around. I was worried children would start on him and he wouldn't say. Kaison's teacher came to visit us in our home and his dad and I went to a 'new parents' coffee morning. Both of these things really helped us get to know the teacher and the teacher get to know us better,' Ruhena explained. Kaison's Reception class teacher reports that Kaison still talks about when they visited his home. 'When it was time to start nursery at Marian Richardson, Kaison's key worker at Wapping helped us make an All About... book to share with his new school, which helped the teachers get to know him before he started there,' commented Ruhena.

Ruhena had other worries too. 'Because he doesn't like change and new foods, I was worried about his eating. The staff were really good about this and gave Kaison the choice of packed lunches or school dinners for the first two weeks. They sat with Kaison and encouraged him to try new foods and different coloured cups. This really worked!'

Children and parents need time to familiarise themselves with key members of staff and their new school environments. Kaison is settled now and happily playing and exploring alongside his peers. These successful transition arrangements illustrate the value of teachers working closely with parents to make the move a smooth and happy one for children. This allows children to feel secure in their new environments and enables them to develop and learn effectively.





# Case Study

## A Multi Agency Approach

### Transition from Day Care to Nursery

## Blue Gate Fields Infants and Yusrah

#### Planning Ahead

Yusrah is a smiley, determined four year old girl. She has Cerebral Palsy affecting all four limbs. Her language, in both Sylheti and English, has been delayed but is now developing in leaps and bounds. She has one older and one younger brother and lives with her mum and dad. Her first experience of leaving her mother was when she attended a day nursery. Masuma, her mother, remembers, 'She used to cry quite often there when I left her in the mornings.' Before starting in the nursery at Blue Gate Fields Infant School, in September, aged three and a half, a full transition plan was successfully implemented. This was coordinated by the Advisory Teacher for Pupils with a Disability. This whole process was started in the previous spring term and this early planning proved essential in helping Yusrah to settle.

#### Visiting the Child in Her Current Setting

Yusrah's class teacher had never before taught a child with her particular additional needs and although she was very much looking forward to it, she was also a little concerned as to how she could meet Yusrah's needs and how her equipment was to be managed and stored. The first step was for her new nursery class teacher and teaching assistant to visit her twice in her present setting, early in the summer term. They both found this an invaluable experience that helped them begin to develop a relationship with Yusrah.

#### Familiarising the Child and Family with the New Setting

The next step was to familiarise Yusrah and her parents with Blue Gate Fields Infant School. As with all new parents, they were invited to attend the parents' meetings and settling in/drop in sessions at the school. A home visit was made and a photo taken of Yusrah to put above her coat peg in her new class. Every effort was made to ensure that Yusrah and her family made more than the average number of visits to the school. This helped practitioners to address practical issues and assess what physical changes needed to be made to the building and whether any accessible furniture needed to be ordered.

Joint visits by the Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist proved essential as they advised on ways that practitioners could support Yusrah. Advice from the Advisory Teacher for Pupils with a Disability, about how to arrange transport and apply for funding was also very useful. In the end, only one small change was necessary, which was to make the changing area more accessible. Over time, greater flexibility in thinking was used to rearrange the room and problem solve where to store Yusrah's wheelchair, and standing frame. Furthermore, it proved more useful to wait until Yusrah was actually attending nursery before making a full assessment and subsequent adjustments to enable her to access equipment and furniture. This enabled practitioners to get to know her properly and find out how she accessed the learning environment.





Wherever possible, activities for all children were set out by nursery practitioners on Yusrah's adjustable table. Her peers were also encouraged to play with the sand in her standing frame bowl with her, to enable Yusrah to interact with them.

### **Multi Professional Meeting**

In addition to the visits, two multi professional meetings were arranged before Yusrah started school. Yusrah's parents and all professionals working with her came to meet the headteacher, class teacher, teaching assistants and Inclusion Coordinator in order to hand over important information and answer questions.

Yusrah's Portage worker had, very helpfully, made a lovely All About... book with photos in it plus essential information about her likes and dislikes, which she passed on to the school. During her time in nursery, regular termly meetings were planned in advance to monitor Yusrah's progress and ensure good communication between outside agencies, school and home. The summer term meeting, after she had been in nursery for a whole school year, became another transition meeting where her new Reception teacher could talk to her nursery teacher. For Yusrah's security and continuity of care, the school planned for one of her teaching assistants to follow her through into the Reception class.

### **Inclusion Training**

The Advisory Teacher for Pupils with a Disability delivered excellent inclusion awareness training to the whole school. In addition, she met the whole of the Early Years Foundation Stage team and the SENCO to inform them and answer queries about Cerebral Palsy and Yusrah's particular needs. This helped to develop practitioners' awareness and confidence in meeting Yusrah's needs.

### **Parental View of Transition to Nursery**

Yusrah's mother, Masuma, says: 'The help I most valued whilst Yusrah was settling into nursery was having a teaching assistant who spoke my first language, Sylheti.' She felt that: 'Having a teaching assistant who was able to talk to Yusrah, in her first language when she was upset, was also particularly helpful.'

She also appreciated having the opportunity to get to know Yusrah's teaching assistant before she started nursery in September and having transport to and from school arranged for them. Masuma believes that: 'All these arrangements, as well as being allowed to stay with my daughter at school for the first few days, helped Yusrah settle very well.'

## Case Study

# Transition from Playgroup to Nursery

## Lincoln Hall Playgroup

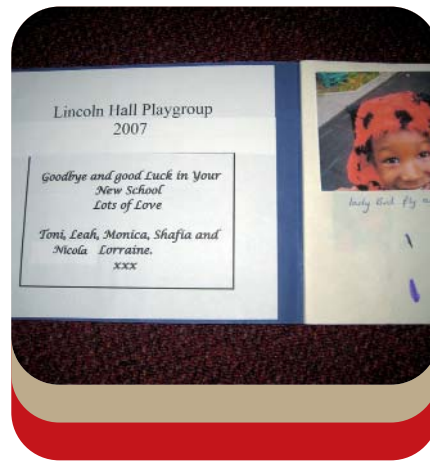
Lincoln Hall Playgroup is a friendly, inclusive early years setting with 24 morning and 24 afternoon places. They use a whole range of strategies to support their children in moving from one setting to another.

*'Our son's speech and language was delayed for his age and the staff at Lincoln Hall Playgroup provided over and above what you would expect to support us in his move to St Saviour's school. They updated us throughout the whole process which lessened our anxiety a great deal. It meant we could concentrate on being parents without worrying about arrangements. All children make a photo memory book as they move through playgroup. The children choose what events and interests to record, at home and school. It became Jake's treasured possession and meant that we didn't have to explain so much to people who didn't know him yet. Staff took him to visit his new school twice and the Special Education Needs Coordinator and his class teacher to be also visited Lincoln Hall. As a result, Jake's transition to St Saviour's was very smooth. He settled very well to his new environment and his communication skills have come on leaps and bounds. We were so pleased, we wrote a letter to thank the playgroup staff.'*

**Mat Sheldon, parent.**

### Visits

Practitioners at Lincoln Hall Playgroup highly value using a range of different visits to settle children, in a flexible manner to meet their individual needs. Home visits are used to give information about the playgroup to the parents and for parents to share the child's likes, dislikes, fears, information about development and anything else important to them. In addition to these visits, parent and child are encouraged to just 'drop in' to the setting with their parent on an informal basis for about an hour at a time. After the start date, parents usually stay for a couple of sessions and then start leaving their children for a short amount of time, increasing it gradually over time. At transition to nursery or reception, the key person for a child with additional needs accompanies them on one or more visits to their new school. With some children it has proved helpful to visit schools at different times of the day to experience all the daily routines, meet their future teachers, special educational needs coordinators and teaching assistants. Parents may also join these visits. The school practitioners are also invited to visit Lincoln Hall Playgroup to meet their future pupils in a setting that is familiar to the children. This provides an important shared experience to talk to children about when they arrive at school.



A three year old boy with social and communication needs was prioritised for a playgroup place. He received home visits and started playgroup with his mum who stayed with him for the first few sessions. All went well until mum began leaving him in the playgroup for five minutes. He found this very distressing and was extremely upset. Over the course of a couple of weeks he was handed to his key person each time and attempts were made to distract him; the number of sessions he attended was reduced and dad tried bringing him instead of mum.

However, despite all attempts to help him cope, his distress did not lessen. A new plan was made with the parents; he would stop coming but his key person would start visiting him at home, twice a week, for a three week period. Each time, a specific bag was taken for him to open containing toys that interested him. He greeted her at the door and was fully engaged while she was there. The bags of toys were left with him and he then tried coming back to playgroup once again, bringing with him a chosen bag of toys each time. The time he spent increased gradually, at his own pace, and he began to settle without his parents. This flexible approach clearly enabled him to make a very successful transition to playgroup.

### Using Photos with Brandon

Brandon, a three year old boy with social and communication needs, started at Lincoln Hall Playgroup following the involvement of an Educational Psychologist who suggested that his parents consider the playgroup. Brandon loves films, going out on public transport and riding his bike. His playgroup key person and the Inclusion Coordinator visited him at home a total of four times before he started at the playgroup to help build a relationship with him and to discuss Brandon's specific needs with his parents.

Each time they went they took toys with them (transition objects) so that they were familiar to him when he saw them in the playgroup setting. Lincoln Hall encourages all children to bring security objects such as a special toy or blanket to put in their tray for when they are tired or upset. When practitioners visited Brandon at home, they left him photographs of the adults working in the setting so that he would recognise them when he first started at playgroup. When he arrived at Lincoln Hall Playgroup, Brandon settled well and found it comforting to have photographs with him at all times of himself and his family. Brandon began to talk when he was four and a half. Before he began reception at St Paul's with St Luke's



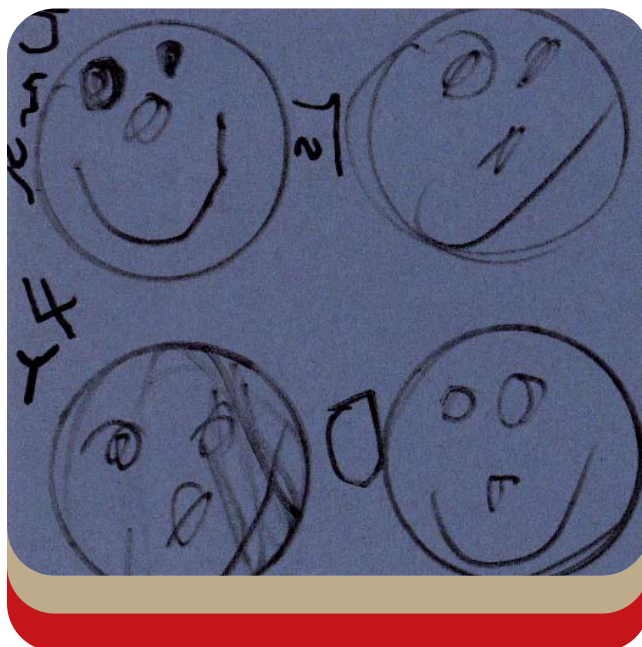
School, playgroup practitioners also made a transition book for him with photographs of his new school, the playground, dinner hall, practitioners and children. He took it home over the six week holidays to help familiarise him with the school.

Brandon's mother's perception of his transition: 'My biggest worry about Brandon transferring to a new place was that the workers would find his behaviour difficult and wouldn't understand why he was like that.'

'When he was at Lincoln Hall Playgroup I found it very reassuring when his keyworker told me she had worked with lots of other children with similar difficulties before.'

'Staff allowing me plenty of time to talk about everyday things about Brandon really helped me settle Brandon in. When Brandon was younger he didn't talk or understand much so I needed to explain things for him. Getting support has really helped him especially in developing his language. He is making great progress in school now.'

'When I visited his new school, St Paul's with St Luke's, the headteacher reassured me a lot and gave me hope by showing me another child with similar needs doing very well in Year 6. You wouldn't have known he was autistic.'



## Case Study

# Transition from Playgroup to School

## Tate House Playgroup



Tate House Playgroup is a small early years setting providing 12 morning and 12 afternoon places. Staff take every opportunity to show that they value the children's interests and experiences and try to support transition from home to playgroup on a daily basis. One way they do this is by giving each and every child a special book. The children themselves are invited to make choices about what to put in these books. This may be a photo of them doing a favoured activity, which they may well have taken themselves or simply a leaf they collected on the way to playgroup. Accessing the children's voices is a priority at Tate House Playgroup and is clearly visible in the choices the children made when their garden was redesigned. They take the books/diaries home, which encourages communication between family and child. Adults act as scribes for the child and help them stick in whatever they want.

'These books have become much more than just a neat collection of work', explains Tracy McCormack, Playgroup Leader. 'They give us helpful information about what really motivates the children. We use this in our planning, especially during transition times.'

It is Tracy's experience that: 'It is often hardest for the children who are left behind when others, their friends, move on to nursery. So we pay particular attention to planning activities that existing children enjoy a lot, in order to distract them from missing their friends and from the tears of the new arrivals.'

When it comes to moving on to school nursery, Tate House Playgroup arranges cover to visit the school the child will be attending. They take photos of different areas, for example where they will hang their coats, the snack area and different play areas. Staff use these photos to make books about the child's new school and then children are encouraged to regularly browse through the books with adults, other children in the playgroup and their family to familiarise them with school and have an opportunity to ask questions before they start there.

Tracy also acknowledges that choosing and applying for a school can be a very stressful time for a parent and she often supports parents by explaining the school application system and liaising with Pupil Services in order to follow up school applications.







# Transition from Reception to Year 1

The transition from Reception to Year 1 marks an important step in a child's school life. It is vitally important to ensure it works smoothly for children. Even though their new class is within the same school it will still involve a number of changes for them. The following advice is mainly taken from a Tower Hamlets publication, **Moving On: Effective Transitions from Reception to Year 1**.



# Ideas for Effective Practice

## Children's Experience

Make time to discuss with children what will happen to enable them to express their hopes and anxieties. Use some of the activities suggested in the section, 'Children's Activities'. Invite current Year 1 children to talk to Reception children about their experiences of making the transition the previous year.



## Parents' Views

Hold a parents' information session to talk to parents about how the children's transitions will be supported by the school. Invite parents and children to complete an All About... book. Continue to build positive relationships with parents ensuring that there are daily opportunities for informal conversation as well as more formal open days and conferences.



## Additional Needs

Be sensitive to children for whom the transition may involve more challenges. Arrange a meeting with parents, EYFS and Year 1 staff to discuss any extra support that may be needed at this time.

## Staff Liaison

Make time for Reception and Year 1 staff to visit each others' classrooms and then meet to discuss how the transition can be made as smooth as possible.

## Friendships

Friendships help to ease transitions and it is important to take these into account if children are being reorganised into different class groups.



## New Experiences and Routines

Highlight the Year 1 experiences which may be different for children, for instance using different toilets, going to the dining hall for lunch, assemblies, P.E. Let Reception children visit in the summer term to become familiar with these.

## Settling In

Plan for a settling in period where children's social and emotional needs are given a strong focus. Some children will settle quickly, others will need longer – practitioners need to be flexible and allow for this in planning. Where possible, arrange for a member of the EYFS team to work for the first term in Year 1.

## Developmental Levels

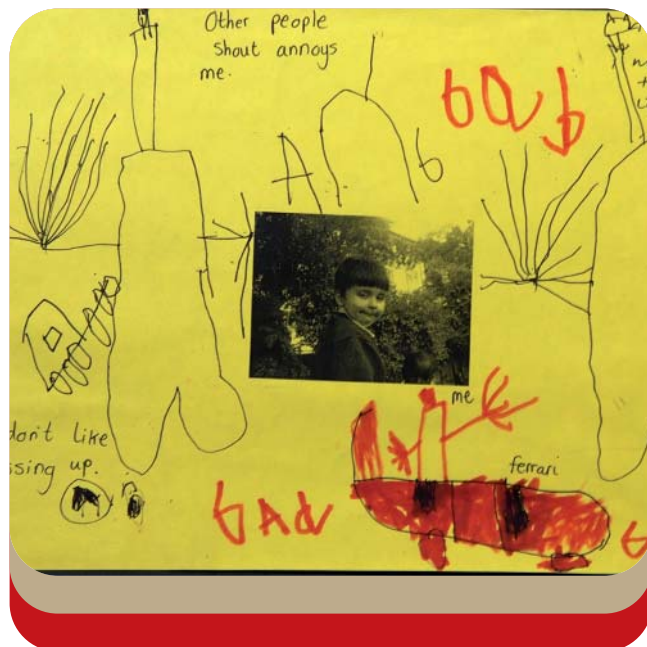
Be aware of children's ages and developmental levels. A child who is only just five is younger than a child who is nearly six in terms of life experience.

## Continuing the Learning

Plan for the learning needs of all children. This will include younger children, children at earlier or later developmental stages, children who are learning English as an additional language and those who have additional needs. Joint planning and co teaching children by both Year 1 and Reception teachers at the end of their last term in Reception and the beginning of their first term in Year 1 is a good way to 'tune' into the varying needs of a particular class.

## Transition Policy

Develop a School Transition Policy which includes Reception to Year 1. (See Guidance for Developing a Transition Policy and Example.)

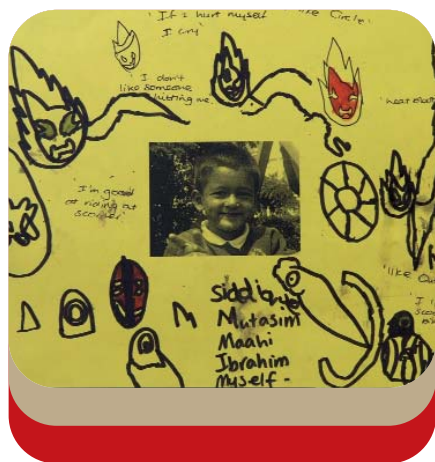




# Case Study

## Transition from Reception to Year 1

### Mowlem Primary School

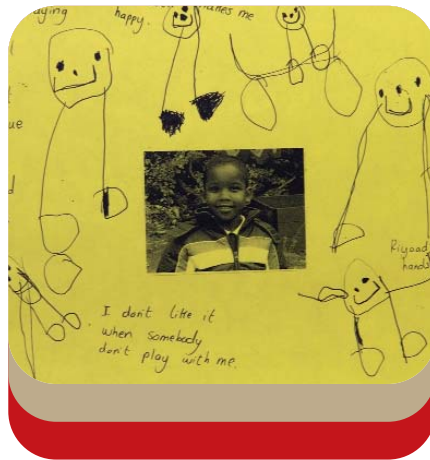


Mowlem School is a one form entry school in Tower Hamlets with pupils aged 3-11. In recent years, practitioners have worked hard to develop the ways in which they support their pupils' transitions and transfers across the Early Years Foundation Stage. They started by inviting workers from PIP (Parent Information Point) into their transition meetings for parents with children new to the school. A Reception teacher, Raakhee Tailor, and a new Year 1 teacher, Vicky Wright, decided to develop this further. They encouraged the whole school team to look at how Early Years Foundation Stage philosophy, approaches and practice could be used and adapted across all key stages. One way class teachers did this was by collaboratively planning role play linked to schemes of work. Raakhee has also been leading a Budding Project where practitioners from different schools have taken time to come together, self evaluate and share their good practice. This has proved very beneficial in generating new ideas and projects to improve transitions.

Practitioners have used a version of the visual strategy of mind maps with children to enable

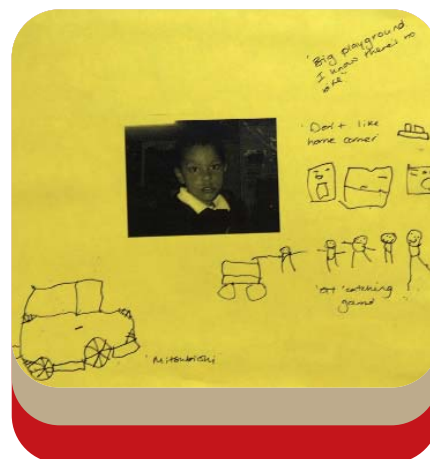
them to express what they would like their future practitioners to know about them. To create these 'Me Maps' children are encouraged to draw or write whatever they wish about themselves, and the end products are then displayed at the parent meetings so that parents have something to talk informally about with the teachers. Parents also add their own comments based what they want the Year 1 practitioners to know about their children. The children then see the 'Me Maps' displayed in their new Year 1 classrooms in September, making the rooms feel familiar and helping the children feel valued.

Raakhee has also worked to improve transition by raising the profile of teaching assistant preparation. 'Preparing teaching assistants has been underestimated in transition work', Raakhee explains. A vital part of this is creating opportunities for practitioners to swap roles towards the end the summer term in order to help them experience and understand each others' settings. Consequently, it is possible for them to better prepare the children for their new environments. It has been particularly useful for Year 1 teaching assistants to watch how Early

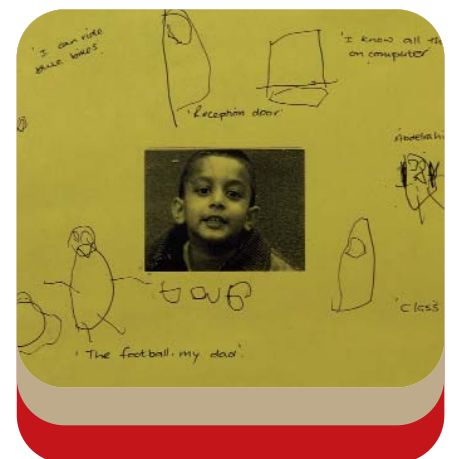


Years Foundation Stage practitioners observe child initiated play, support and record this play and use this information to inform their planning.

Practitioners at Mowlem have worked hard to make curriculum continuity very visible for both adults and children. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, stories are often introduced in nursery and then specifically revisited in Reception with a different focus. In nursery, the focus might be linked to physical movements and rhyming whilst in Reception there would be a greater focus on words and perhaps making their own versions of the stories. Practitioners have found that children benefit from seeing a familiar text and as a result approach the



activities with more enthusiasm and confidence. Similarly, story sacks, props and other visual supports are used more frequently in Year 1. Planning in Year 1, particularly for the first half term of the year, is very much shared with Reception and resources used in the first two weeks are familiar to the pupils as ones they would have used in Reception. Raakhee reports: 'A very pleasing and visible sign of improvement in the transition of pupils, has been a reduction in the number of



Year 1 children peering through their classroom window into the EYFS playground and less requests to return to their familiar setting.'







# Children Using Transport Services

**Transition for children who are bussed into setting/schools by transport services needs to be particularly carefully thought out if these children and their families are to be well supported. It may be difficult to meet face to face with families who do not bring their children in or pick them up regularly. Families may also live a considerable distance from the setting/school and they may face additional barriers to getting to setting/schools for meetings, settling in periods or other events.**

# Ideas for Effective Practice

## Understanding the Child's Experiences

It is useful if the child's key person can join the bus on at least one occasion to familiarise themselves with this aspect of the child's day. Developing a relationship with the escort from transport services means that information can be shared about the child's experiences on a daily basis. Identify a practitioner (Transport Coordinator) who has responsibility for overseeing, monitoring and reviewing the children's experience of transport.

## Home Visits

Before the child starts at the setting/school, arrange a home visit by the child's key person and perhaps the Transport Coordinator. This provides an opportunity to discuss the family's needs and how best to support them as well as starting to build important relationships. A home visit can also help develop the family's confidence with transport arrangements and the child's sense of security. Provide photographs of staff who will be escorting the child, as well as photographs of the key person and other practitioners. For some families, regular home visits, throughout their child's time at the setting/school is an important way of developing and maintaining relationships.

## Explain Procedures

Explain to parents what is involved in transporting their child. Make sure they are aware of how their child will be kept safe (for example, harnesses/car seats, first aid qualification of escort). If the child has a



**Children may use transport services if they have a specific additional need and attend a relevant specialist setting/school in a different area of the borough. For other children, there may be no places in their local schools so they are transported to schools further away, who have spaces. Some families who have recently arrived in the country may have missed deadlines for applying for school places. These families may have little or no knowledge of how the education system works and, therefore, support around transition is essential.**





particular medical and or physical need agree and record procedures using a Health Care Plan and explain how this will be managed. Ensure that parents are aware that escorts will only hand over the child to agreed family members. Make sure that parents have plenty of opportunities to ask questions.

### **Settling In**

Discuss settling arrangements and ask if parents can accompany their child until the child is settled and secure on the bus. This can also help reassure parents that their child is happy and also means that parents have an understanding of this part of their child's day. If this is not possible, be as flexible as possible about how parents can help settle their children (for example visiting at a time of day convenient to them, being settled in by another family member, additional home visits so that children can get to know their key person at home). Be aware that you may need to make changes to your settling in policy to reflect the needs of children using transport services.



### **Supporting Parents to Visit**

Make it clear to families of children using transport services that they are welcome to visit at any time that is convenient for them. When they do come, it is important that they are made to feel welcome and that practitioners make time to talk to them. Parents also need to be made aware that they are welcome to join their child on the bus whenever there is space.

### **Providing Information**

Families who are unable to visit the setting/school regularly may need extra information about what happens in the setting/school. A photo book of the different elements of their child's day and the different types of activity on offer will provide them with a starting point for discussions with their child.

### **Using Link Books**

A home-setting/school link book can be helpful in supporting communication between parents and the setting/school, if parents are confident in communicating in this way. If not, photographs sent home regularly showing what children have been doing, can help involve parents in their child's day.



## Children's Diaries

Children's Diaries are an important way of sharing information between parents and practitioners. They can be sent home with children using transport services, following an initial meeting or phone call to explain what they are for and how parents can contribute. It would be good to include some photographs of the child's journey in the Diary, if children are happy to do this.

## Phone Calls

Regular phone calls to families of children using transport services can help develop and maintain a relationship. These might include a weekly or monthly update on how the child is getting on, and what they have been doing, as well as advance warning of events such as meetings or celebrations. They are also a chance for parents to ask questions and to provide information about what the child has been doing at home.



# Activities







# Activities for Children

Before, during and after transition it is very helpful to plan different activities which will provide the opportunity for children to talk and express their needs and feelings. They may not be able to articulate in words exactly what they are thinking and feeling but these activities enable them to express themselves in different ways.

## Ideas for Effective Practice

### Exploring and Recording Children's Views

- Introduce All About... books to parents and discuss different ways they can find out and record their child's views (see All About... Books: Information for Practitioners for detailed guidance).
- Use the child's Diary to record information about the child, their views and experiences through observations, photographs, their work and comments.
- Help children make their own personal albums of photographs and pictures of what is significant to them about their setting to take to their new school.
- Make 'treasure boxes' with the children. Children use a shoe box or something similar and add photographs, drawings and captions about themselves.





### **Puppets**

Introduce a puppet or soft toy who is going to a new setting/school/class during a circle time which can 'tell' the children what they are looking forward to as well as their concerns. The children can share their views and give advice. This activity can also be carried out after children have transferred. Children can offer 'expert' advice about transitions to others in their new setting/school or if they return for a visit to their previous setting.

### **Preparatory Activities**

Plan activities in the term before transition about starting school and change. Include opportunities for role play and for children to express themselves through creative activities. For example, include school uniforms, book bags and other things associated with new schools in the home corner.

### **Stories**

Read stories about different experiences of change. Include books about starting at a setting/school as well as books about change such as 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. Children may make connections to both kinds of stories. Use dual language books as appropriate. (See Book List for ideas.)



### **Visit to School**

Arrange for children to visit their new school and to take photographs of different areas, activities, staff and significant objects to refer to back to in their setting, for example, a photograph of their key person, where they will hang their coats, playground and lunch area.

### **After Transition to School**

Arrange for children who have transferred from a setting to come back and visit staff to talk about what school is like and possibly make a recording (DVD) or bring photographs of school.

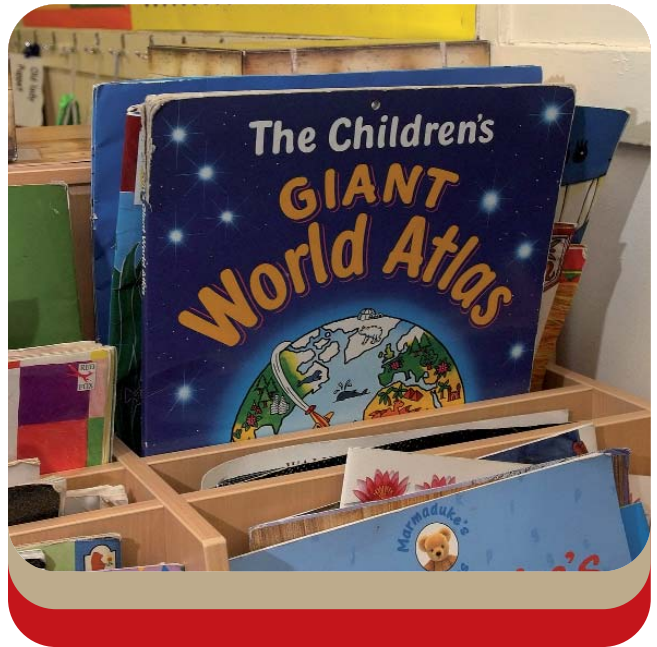
### **Preparing Children in School**

Prepare established group of children for new arrivals. For example, have a display of photographs of the new children with some information about them, to talk about with children who are already there.

# Picture Books for Early Years on Transitions, New Experiences and Changes

No	Authors	Title	Imprint	Class
1	Green, Jen Gordon, Mike	Where's My Peg?: My First Day at School	Wayland, 2000	370 GRE
2	Green, Jen Gordon, Mike	Say Aah!: My First Visit To the Doctor	Hodder Wayland, 2000	610
3	Barkow, Henriette	Tom and Sofia Start School (Bengali and English)	Mantra, 2006	BEN BAR
4	Bloom, Valerie Axtell, David	New Baby	Macmillan Children's, 2000	P BLO
5	Brown, Ruth	Helpful Henry	Andersen, 2003	P BRO
6	Daly, Niki	Where's Jamela?	Frances Lincoln Children's, 2004	P DAL
7	Danziger, Paula Karas, Brain G.	Barfburger Baby, I Was Here First	U G P Putnam's Sons, 2004	P DAN
8	Garden, Nancy	Molly's Family	Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2004	P GAR
9	Green, Jen Gordon, Mike	Are We There Yet? My First Holiday	Hodder Wayland, 2001	P GRE
10	Harris, Robie H. Emberley, Michael	Hi New Baby!	Walker, 2001	P HAR
11	Houghton, Eric Gold, Eric	Crooked Apple Tree	Barefoot, 1999	P HOU
12	Kitze, Carrie A Williams, Rob	I Don't Have Your Eyes	EMK Press, 2003	P KIT
13	Knight, India	The Baby: But I'd Have Liked a Hamster	Puffin, 2007	P KNI
14	Leonard, Marie	Tibili	Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 2002	P LEO
15	Lewis, Kim	My Friend Harry	Walker Books, 1997	P LEW
16	Rankin, Joan	Oh, Mum!: A Starting School Story	Red Fox, 2002	P RAN
17	Slegers, Liesbet	Kevin Goes to School	Frances Lincoln Children's, 2005	P SLE
18	Vulliamy, Clara	Tom and Small	Collins Picture Lions, 2004	P VUL
19	Wild, Margaret Legge, David	Tom Goes to Nursery	Southwood, 2001	P WIL
20	Willis, Jeanne	What Did I Look Like When I Was a Baby?	Andersen, 2003	P WIL













# Guidance for Developing a Transition Policy in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Children experience many transitions in their lives. Establishing and building links between home and different care and education contexts is an important foundation for supporting smooth transitions. These contexts include schools, settings, childminders, after school clubs and children's centre activities. Other significant transitions include a change of key person or a room change within a setting.

The Early Years Foundation Stage clearly states the importance of smooth transitions to maintain children's emotional wellbeing and progression in learning and development. It is essential that children's views, preferences and interests inform the transition process and that parents are closely involved in supporting and planning for transition. In addition, schools and settings will need to develop strong links to ensure that transitions are a positive and well supported experience for children.

Settings and schools need to develop a Transition Policy which outlines effective procedures and practices. In schools, this will be included in a policy which addresses transitions across all key stages and between schools, for example between mainstream and special schools.

## What to Include in Your Transition Policy

Ideas and examples to consider when developing your own policy.

### 1. A statement of intent

**Decide on your definition of transition and include it in your statement. Indicate the range of transitions that your policy is referring to. For example: -**

'At ..... we define transitions as any time when children have to manage change. This may be:

- starting at a school, setting or other early years childcare such as childminder or after school club
- a change in key person, room or class within the setting/school
- daily transitions when children are admitted to or leave the setting/school
- at other times, children may start or leave the setting/school due to individual circumstances, such as moving house.'

'Children are experts in their own lives and we include the child's voice in the process as transitions are planned for and managed. We acknowledge that parents are their child's first educators and that transitions need to be planned in partnership with them. The child's key person, as described in the Early Years Foundation Stage, will be central to this process.'

'We are committed to early intervention and want to use first transitions as opportunities to share information about children and make sure that every child is receiving the support that will give them the best possible experience in the early years.'

## 2. Clarification of terms

This section makes clear any specific terms that are used in the policy. For example:

- The term **parents** is used throughout to refer to parents and carers.
- **EYFS** - Early Years Foundation Stage
- **Key person** - the key person for each child as described in the EYFS
- **Inclusion Coordinator** – position in the Special Education Needs Code of Practice called SENCO'

## 3. Objectives

Identify your objectives for the policy. For example:

'We aim to:-

- Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability should be fully supported in making transitions.
- Acknowledge that children are experts in their own lives and that listening to their views, feelings and concerns around transitions is central to providing the best possible care and support.
- Work in partnership with parents and ensure the information that they share is used to create the best possible 'conditions' for smooth transitions for their children.
- Acknowledge that parents too may experience some anxiety or have particular concerns around their children's transitions and offer additional support where necessary.
- Establish effective communication, to share relevant information with other settings or schools, to ensure that children's needs are met and that there is continuity in their learning.
- Work effectively with professionals from other agencies, such as local and community health services, or where children are looked after by the local authority to identify and meet the needs of individual children.
- Ensure that all staff have the opportunity to enhance their knowledge, skills and understanding around the experience of transition for young children so that they can provide the best possible support.'

## 4. Role of Key Staff

Ensure the policy includes the roles and responsibilities of key staff involved in transition. For example:

'The Setting Manager/Early Years Coordinator will:

- Take a lead in developing our Transition Policy and practice.
- Update their own knowledge, access training and implement Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and local authority guidance.
- Develop links with local settings/schools.
- Plan time for the key people to build relationships with new children and their parents.
- Liaise with outside agencies who are already involved with individual children to ensure coordination over plans for transition.
- Ensure that rotas are based on making the key people available for the children that are transferring to their care.
- Ensure that staff take part in relevant training so that all children in the setting have their needs met.'

'The key person will:

- Offer a genuine relationship to children who are making the transition into their setting/school.
- Arrange a home visit with the family in order to share information and plan the transition with the parents.
- Establish a relationship with parents and share information for example All About... books.
- 'Listen' to the child's individual experience of transition which will be expressed in a variety of ways as well as through language.
- Respond sensitively to a child's views, feelings, and behaviour.
- Have more in depth knowledge of the different circumstances that might surround a child's transition and offer support as needed.
- Offer their perspective to outside agencies involved with individual children and families as advised by the Manager/Early Years Coordinator.'

## 5. Meeting Individual Needs

All children have individual needs, and transition arrangements need to be flexible enough to respond to these. In your policy, outline how you ensure there is flexibility in meeting individual needs.

'We are committed to meeting individual children's needs and ensure that we respond with sensitivity and flexibility. For example:

- use of transitional/comfort objects
- time taken to settle and parent support
- support of key person'



The policy should acknowledge that transitions for disabled children, those with other additional needs and other vulnerable groups are likely to involve a much higher level of planning and support. This will include Looked After Children, refugees and asylum seekers, newly arrived children and Gypsy, Roma and traveller children.

**Outline the role of the Inclusion Coordinator/SENCO in this process. For example:**

'We ensure that transitions for children with additional needs and vulnerable groups of children will be carefully planned with parents. The Inclusion Coordinator/SENCO will organise a meeting with the parent to discuss the child's needs and develop a Transition Plan, provide information about our setting/school and involve relevant agencies where appropriate. We will review how the child has settled with parents after six weeks.'

'The Inclusion Coordinator will take a lead role in planning transition to school for children with additional needs. This will involve arranging a Transition Plan meeting with the parents, school and support agencies where appropriate, liaison with the school Inclusion Coordinator/SENCO to organise opportunities for the child to visit the school and for relevant school staff to visit the child in our nursery. We will support the parents in using the All About... book and encourage parents to share this with the school.'

## **6. Review**

The policy should be reviewed regularly to update policy and practice. A statement needs to be written in your policy to reflect your commitment to reviewing your procedures in the light of new legislation and guidance.

'This policy will be reviewed regularly. The date of the next review is (month and year). We will reflect upon our practice in considering the effectiveness of our policy, looking at intake and progress of children, staffing and parental involvement. If we feel that our policy needs to be changed (for example in light of new legislation), we will seek to amend it as necessary, seeking support as appropriate. We welcome feedback on this policy and its implementation from parents and all others involved in .....nursery/playgroup/school.'

Date policy written: (month and year)'

# Directory







# Organisations

## **African Women's Welfare Association**

St Margaret House  
5a Old Ford House  
London E2 9PL  
**Tel:** 020 8981 9603

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## **Asian Parents Association for Special Education Needs in Tower Hamlets (APASENTH)**

This organisation includes a project: the Children's and Family Zone, which provides support for families around transition.

The Brady Centre  
192-196 Hanbury Street  
London E1 5HU  
**Tel:** 020 7375 0554

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## **Black Women's Health and Family Support**

1st Floor, 82 Russia Lane  
London E2 9LU  
**Tel:** 020 898 03503

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## **Changing Faces**

Changing Faces is a registered charity which provides information, support and advice to anyone with a facial difference and their family.

The Squire Centre  
33-37 University Street  
London WC1E 6JN  
**Tel:** 0845 45000 275  
**Fax:** 0845 45000 276  
**Web:**  
[www.changingfaces.org.uk](http://www.changingfaces.org.uk)

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## **Contact a Family**

Helps families who care for children with any disability or special need. Contact a Family is a main source of information about rare disorders and can assist affected adults as well as children. Their directory provides an extensive listing of conditions and disorders with related support organisations.

209-211 City Road  
London EC1V 1JN  
**Freephone Helpline:**  
0808 808 3555  
**Textphone Helpline:**  
0808 808 3556  
**Tel:** 020 7608 8700  
**Minicom:** 020 7608 8702  
**Fax:** 020 7608 8701  
**Email:** [info@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:info@cafamily.org.uk)  
**Web:** [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

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## **Down's Syndrome Association (DSA)**

Provides information, counselling and support for people with Down syndrome, their families and carers, as well as being a resource for interested professionals. They strive to improve knowledge of the condition and champion the rights of people with Down's syndrome.

Langdon Down Centre  
2a Langdon Park  
Teddington, Middlesex  
TW11 9PS

**Tel:** 0845 230 0372  
**Fax:** 0845 230 0373  
**Email:** [info@downs-syndrome.org.uk](mailto:info@downs-syndrome.org.uk)  
**Web:** [www.downs-syndrome.org.uk](http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk)

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## **Down Syndrome Education**

Down Syndrome Education provides advice, resources and services to support people with Down syndrome.

Sarah Duffen Centre  
Belmont Street  
Southsea PO5 1NA  
**Tel:** 023 92 855330  
**Fax:** 023 92 855320  
**Email:** [enquiries@downsed.org](mailto:enquiries@downsed.org)  
**Web:** [www.downsed.org](http://www.downsed.org)

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## Early Support

Early Support is the central government mechanism for achieving better coordinated, family focused services for young children with disabilities and their families. Early Support materials include an information booklet, 'Useful Contacts and Organisations' which details an extensive listing of national organisations.

To find out more about Early Support and Early Support publications visit [www.earlysupport.org.uk](http://www.earlysupport.org.uk)

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## Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants

115 Old Street  
London EC1V 9JZ  
**Tel:** 020 7388 0241

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## Kids

A national charity dedicated to helping children and young people with disabilities and special needs develop their skills and abilities and realise their potential. Kids works in close partnership with parents, carers and children to deliver an extensive range of services.

6 Aztec Row  
Berners Road  
London N1 0PW  
**Tel:** 020 7359 3635  
**Fax:** 020 7359 8238  
**Email:** [enquiries@kids.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@kids.org.uk)  
**Web:** [www.kids.org.uk](http://www.kids.org.uk)

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## National Autistic Society

The Society has a helpline for anyone in the UK whose lives are affected by autistic spectrum disorders. It answers enquiries on a wide range of topics and can direct you towards sources of help and support.

393 City Road  
London EC1V 1NG  
**Helpline:** 0845 070 4004  
**Education Advice Line:** 0845 070 4002  
**Tel:** 020 7833 2299 (general enquiries)  
**Textphone:** 0845 070 4003  
**Fax:** 020 7833 9666  
**Email:** [autismhelpline@nas.org.uk](mailto:autismhelpline@nas.org.uk)  
**Web:** [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

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## Local branch of National Autistic Society

NAS Tower Hamlets  
Montefiore Centre  
Hanbury Street  
London E1 5HZ  
Family Support Worker  
**Tel:** 020 7377 8407  
Befriending Manager  
**Tel:** 020 7377 1715

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## The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)

Supports families of deaf children. They provide clear and balanced information on all aspects of childhood deafness, including temporary conditions such as glue ear. NDCS also campaigns on behalf of deaf children and their families.

15 Dufferin Street  
London EC1Y 8UR  
**Helpline:** 0808 800 8880 (voice and text)  
**Tel:** 020 7490 8656 (general enquiries)  
**Fax:** 020 7251 5020  
**Email:** [helpline@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:helpline@ndcs.org.uk)  
**Web:** [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

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## National Society for Epilepsy

The UK's largest epilepsy charity. It provides: care; medical services; research; plus a wide range of information; education and training to people with epilepsy, their families, friends and professionals involved in their care.

Chalfont Centre  
Chesham Lane  
Chalfont St Peter  
Buckinghamshire SL9 0RJ  
**Helpline:** 01494 601 400  
**Tel:** 01494 601 300 (general enquiries)  
**Fax:** 01494 871 927  
**Web:** [www.epilepsynse.org.uk](http://www.epilepsynse.org.uk)

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## Refugee Council

Bondway House  
3 Bondway London SW8 1SJ  
Tel: 020 7582 6922

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### Scope

A national disability charity for cerebral palsy. Scope's work is focused on four main areas: early years, employment, education and daily living. They provide a range of national and local services and organise local groups. They give information and advice on all aspects of cerebral palsy and disability issues. A team of trained counsellors provide clients with emotional support and initial counselling.

6 Market Road  
London N7 9PW  
Tel: 020 7619 7100  
Web: [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

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### Sense

The major UK voluntary organisation for children and adults born with multi sensory impairment (MSI) and their families. The website has information about the help and services available to children with MSI, their families and professionals.

11–13 Clifton Terrace  
Finsbury Park  
London N4 3SR  
Tel: 0845 127 0060  
Textphone: 0845 127 0062  
Fax: 0845 127 0061  
Email: [info@sense.org.uk](mailto:info@sense.org.uk)  
Web: [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

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## Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)

Aims to achieve a better quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing people. It does this by campaigning, lobbying, and raising awareness of deafness, by providing services and through social, medical and technical research.

19–23 Featherstone Street  
London EC1Y 8SL

Helpline: 0808 808 0123

Textphone Helpline:  
0808 808 9000

Fax: 020 7296 8199

Email:  
[informationline@rnid.org.uk](mailto:informationline@rnid.org.uk)

Web: [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

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## Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB)

The RNIB's work helps anyone with a sight problem – through Braille, talking books and computer training, and also with imaginative and practical solutions to everyday challenges. They fund research into preventing and treating eye disease.

105 Judd Street  
London WC1H 9NE

Helpline: 0845 766 9999

Tel: 020 7388 1266  
(general enquiries)

Fax: 020 7388 2034

Email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

Web: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

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## Whizz Kidz

Provides mobility aids and lightweight or powered wheelchairs for children with locomotion disabilities.

Elliot House  
10–12 Allington Street  
London SW1E 5EH

Tel: 020 7233 6600

Fax: 020 7233 6611

Email: [info@whizz-kidz.org.uk](mailto:info@whizz-kidz.org.uk)

Web: [www.whizz-kidz.org.uk](http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk)

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# Support Services

**African Families Service (AFS)**  
**Advisory Teacher for Pupils with a Disability or Severe Medical Condition**  
**Child Development Team**  
**Early Years Inclusion Team**  
**Educational Psychology Service**  
**Early Years Hearing Impaired/Deaf Service**  
**Children's Occupational Therapy Service**  
**Parents Advice Centre (PAC)**  
**Phoenix Outreach Team**  
**Children's Physiotherapy Service**  
**Parental Engagement in Schools and Early Years Settings**  
**Portage Service**  
**Early Years Speech and Language Therapy Team**  
**Vision Impairment Service**

## **African Families Service (AFS)**

The aims of this service include sharing knowledge, skills and expertise with professionals working with Black African children and families.

### **Children's Social Care**

Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent E14 2BG  
**Tel:** 020 7364 2192

## **Advisory Teacher for Pupils with a Disability or Severe Medical Condition**

The Advisory Teacher works to support inclusive practice within mainstream primary schools. She is involved in supporting effective transitions for children with a physical disability or severe medical condition.

This includes transitions:

- from home to school
- from setting to school
- from nursery to school
- from school to school
- from class to class

The teacher is involved with a wide range of transition work which aims to ensure that transitions are successful for individual children and their families.

This involves:

- Building a relationship with individual children and their families.
- Acting as the Lead Professional for children with complex needs, arranging and chairing Team Around the Child meetings.
- Attending transition planning meetings in settings and schools.
- Delivering a wide range of training on inclusion, resources, services available, specific impairments and medical conditions.

The Support for Learning Service  
85, Harford Street, London E1 4PY  
**Tel:** 020 7364 6236  
**Mobile** 07507563950

## **Child Development Team**

The Child Development Team is a multi disciplinary team whose members come from a wide range of professional backgrounds in both health and social care. The team provides assessment and advice on care management of children with evidence of developmental difficulties from birth to 19 years. The team is part of the Integrated Service for Disabled Children in Tower Hamlets.

As part of the Integrated Service for Disabled Children we work in partnership with children, their families and others involved in their care to:

- work towards maximising the potential and to enhance the quality of life of children with complex developmental needs
- role in advocacy in speaking out on behalf clients and raising disability awareness
- support transition of children in to different settings as appropriate.

### Referral Method and Referral Criteria

All referrals have to be completed on the Common Assessment Framework.

The team criteria for assessment are children with evidence of delay in two or more areas and resident in the borough or registered with a Tower Hamlets GP.

Wellington Way Centre

1A Wellington Way, London E3 4NE

Tel: 020 8980 3510

Fax: 020 8981 9298

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## Early Years Inclusion Team

### Area Inclusion Coordinators

The Early Years Area Inclusion Coordinators work to support inclusive practice within maintained day nurseries, private, voluntary and independent early years settings, and children's centres. The team is involved in developing and supporting effective transitions for children with additional needs and other vulnerable groups.

This includes transitions:

- from home into settings
- between settings
- within settings
- from settings to schools
- involving childminders and other carers

The team is involved in a range of transition work which aims to ensure that transitions are successful for individual children and their families.

This involves:

- Working with parents and the Lead Professional for children with complex needs to plan transitions and involve the Team Around the Child as part of the Early Support Programme.
- Supporting the Inclusion Coordinators for early years settings to plan transitions between settings and into school.
- Liaising with agencies involved.
- Advising on appropriate resources to support transitions, enable children to access learning and development opportunities within the settings and reflect positive images of disability and diversity.
- Providing and accessing appropriate training for staff to ensure successful transitions for children with additional needs.

### Early Years Service

Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent

London E14 2BG

Tel: 020 7364 4925

### Early Intervention Support Worker

The Early Intervention Support Worker (EISW) works with families of young children with disabilities and additional needs referred by statutory and voluntary services in Tower Hamlets. The EISW provides support to help families to access service for children such as stay and play groups held in children's centres. The EISW also supports parents in accessing childcare provision such as playgroups and day nurseries as well as school nurseries when children have not attended daycare provision.

The EISW will contact and visits families in order to offer information, guidance and support about local services and will accompany and welcome families to services. The EISW works in partnerships with other organisations and professionals to facilitate access to play and learning activities.

### Support with Transition

An important aspect of the EISW's role is to support transitions for disabled children and children with additional needs from home to playgroups and day nurseries or to nursery school when children have not attended an early years setting.

This involves:

- Contacting and arranging to visit the children and families at home.
- Discussing support needs of children and arrangements required to ensure that children's needs are met.
- Supporting parents in communicating their child's needs to staff and addressing concerns which helps to reassure both parents and staff.
- Discussing settling arrangements for the child and specific support requirements during this transition period including dropping of and collection arrangements.
- Establishing the support parents would like during the transition period, for example remaining with the family for settling sessions or to provide interpretation in Bengali.
- Liaising with colleagues in the Inclusion Team (Area Inclusion Coordinators).
- Contacting relevant agencies and services involved, for example Child Development Team, Educational Psychology Service, Speech and Language Therapy Service, Dietician, Community Nursing Team, Advisory Teacher for Physical and Medical needs, Portage Service.

### Early Years Service

Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent

London E14 2BG

Tel: 020 7364 6089

### Educational Psychology Service

Educational Psychologists provide a range of psychological services to promote and support inclusive education within schools and other early years' settings.

Young children who may have special educational needs are notified to the local authority (via the SEN section) through a 332 Notification from a health professional and are then allocated an Educational Psychologist. The Educational Psychologist will undertake a variety of activities, including:

- Visiting the child and their parents at home.
- Observing the child in their early years' setting (if they are in one).
- Talking to early years staff.
- Talking to and liaising with other professionals.
- Making an assessment of the child's level of development – through observation, play based assessment, developmental checklists or cognitive tests.

The Educational Psychologist will:

- Provide strategies and suggestions to parents and early years staff on ways of supporting their child's development and/or behaviour.
- Discuss with parents possible early years' settings (if the child isn't in one), and facilitate the child's placement in a setting if necessary.
- Complete a written Record of Involvement for parents and share this with others working with the family.
- Contribute to a Statutory Assessment of the child's special educational needs, if this is agreed/appropriate.

Educational Psychologists support transition for young children into their first early years setting or from a setting to school in the following ways:

- Talking to parents about how to best support the transition.



- Talking to parents about their own feelings about separating from their child and ways of managing the separation for the benefit of their child.
- Talking to staff in the early years' setting about the child and about strategies that are likely to be successful.
- Providing information about the child, usually in the form of a Record of Involvement.
- Liaising with other professionals and attending planning meetings as appropriate.

### Educational Psychology Service

Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent

London E14 2BG

Tel: 020 7364 4243

### Early Years Hearing Impaired/Deaf Service

The Early Years Team provides a service for families with deaf/hearing impaired babies and children from birth to three and a half years. The Early Years Teachers for the Deaf will be present at the diagnosis of hearing loss together with the Consultant Audiological Physician. Following diagnosis a member of the team will work in partnership with families and provide ongoing support through regular home visits.

Early support aims to:

- Help parents come to terms with their child's hearing loss.
- Help parents to understand the nature/degree of the hearing loss.
- Support families in establishing the wearing of hearing aids.
- Provide information about available support services.
- Liaise with families to feed back information to the audiology clinic.
- Support families with understanding their child's language/listening development.

The team is involved in supporting families and children with transition into a variety of early years settings.

This includes transitions:

- from home into settings
- between settings
- from settings to schools
- involving childminders and other carers.

The majority of deaf/hearing impaired children will attend Overland Children's Centre Deaf Resource Base, which is staffed by a teacher for the deaf and a childcare worker for the deaf/hearing impaired. The children all have a two week settling period, where they attend with their parent/s, which can be extended if necessary. Parents and children are supported with transition from Overland Children's Centre to school nursery provision, which could be into mainstream school or integrated provision for the deaf/hearing impaired at Hague or Culloden School.

The team is involved in a range of transition work which aims to ensure that transitions are successful for individual children and their families. This involves:

- Working closely with the families to inform them of the possible options for early years settings available.
- Working with parents and the Lead Professional for children with complex needs to plan transitions.
- Working with and supporting the Inclusion Coordinators for early years settings to plan transitions between settings and into school.
- Liaising with agencies involved.
- Advising on appropriate resources to support transitions for individual children, with particular regard for the listening environment and how this will impact on hearing aid wearers.
- Advising and supporting early years settings with deaf/hearing impaired children to develop deaf friendly interaction and teaching practices and to be more deaf aware.

- Providing and accessing appropriate training on language/listening development and hearing aids care and use for staff to ensure successful transitions for deaf/hearing impaired children.

### Sensory Impairment Team

Support for Learning Service

85 Harford Street E1 4PY

Tel: 020 7364 6468

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## Children's Occupational Therapy Service

The Occupational Therapists work with children and their families to help them do the everyday things that children need and want to do. This may include supporting schools, maintained day nurseries, private, voluntary and independent early years settings, and children's centres by providing advice, strategies and practical ideas to help meet a child's needs. As part of this role the therapists may support the child, family, and setting staff through the transition process.

Children will be seen by Occupational Therapy when specific functional concerns have been identified. Many children with additional needs will be known or have previously been known to the service prior to the transition process. The Occupational Therapist may need to be informed that transition is being planned. Transition may also activate a need for a new referral to Occupational Therapy for a child.

New referrals can be made using a Common Assessment Framework and forms can be sent directly to the Occupational Therapy services ensuring any specific functional concerns are highlighted. Settings can contact the department by phone to see if a child is known to the services.

Common issues:

- access within the classroom/playground
- toilet access and training
- dressing
- self feeding
- pencil/scissor skills and tool use
- access to play opportunities

### Children's Occupational Therapy

Block 2, Mile End Hospital

Bancroft Road E1 4DG

Each child has an individual therapist.

Tel: 020 8223 8897

Fax: 020 8223 8802

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## Parents Advice Centre (PAC)

The Parents Advice Centre is the Tower Hamlets Parent Partnership Service in the Borough. A team of advice workers offer parents/carers:

- Advice and information about special educational needs and the statutory assessment process.
- Advice and information about reception and mid term admissions.
- Advice and information about secondary transfer through the Choice Advice project.
- Advice and support with appeals if the child is excluded from school.
- Help in translating and understanding letters and written information about their child in Bengali and Somali (and other languages on request).
- Support with writing letters and filling in forms.
- Help in writing down parents' views about their child's special educational needs.
- Support in preparing for meetings such as Annual Reviews.
- Help in resolving any difficulties that arise relating to the assessment or the support a child receives.
- A range of information leaflets.
- Information on SEN related issues and topics.
- Benefits advice (parents need to book an appointment).

- Educational Psychologist advice (parents need to book an appointment).

The team offers help around transition by:

- Offering 1:1 help with Reception, primary and mid term admissions of parents of children with special educational needs.
- Advising and informing parents/carers about secondary transfer through the Choice Advice project.
- Offering advice and information at transition meetings for parents and carers.
- Help parents find out about mainstream and special schools that will best suit their child's needs including possible visits to different schools and educational settings.

The Parents Advice Centre also runs a range of support groups for parents/carers.

#### Parents Advice Centre

85 Harford Street, London E1 4PY

Tel: 020 7364 6489

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### Phoenix Outreach Team

The Phoenix Outreach Team consists of specialist teachers and teaching assistants who have training and expertise in working with children on the autistic spectrum. We work closely with speech and language therapists.

The Outreach Team supports the inclusion of children with autism aged three—16 in the mainstream setting. Regular support is for children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Schools can contact us to request interim advice from our team for children who do not yet have a statement.

The team aims to work closely with teachers and support staff in mainstream to develop their skills in teaching children on the autistic spectrum. Parents of children with a diagnosis of autism can access the parent support groups at Phoenix. Professionals can access training sessions that are held regularly at Phoenix on a range of topics around autism and strategies.

### Phoenix Outreach Team

Phoenix School

49 Bow Road, London E3 2BF

Tel: 020 8980 4740

Email: admin@phoenix.towerhamlets.sch.uk

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### Children's Physiotherapy Service

The Children's Physiotherapy Service consists of a team of Chartered Physiotherapists and assistants who have specialised knowledge and experience of working with children. We provide a community service to any child who lives or attends school/settings in Tower Hamlets. We work closely with families and other professionals to look at the needs of the child as a whole, and aim to encourage each child to develop to their full physical potential.

The team is involved in:

- Advising families and carers about physical management to help children develop.
- Advising on how to hold or position a child to encourage them to move or to make it easier to do things for themselves.
- Assessing and advising on splints, orthotics, braces, footwear, chairs, wheelchairs, standing frames and other specialised equipment to enable the child to access the curriculum.
- Liaising with all other professionals involved with the child.

A smooth transition from home into an early years setting/school or between an early years setting and schools is achieved by ensuring that:

- Advice and education is given to setting/school staff involved with the care of the individual child making sure that everyone involved is confident to manage the child's needs appropriately.
- Physiotherapy is incorporated into the child's normal setting/school day using a physical management programme carried out by staff. This is monitored and changed as and when necessary, depending on the needs of the child.



- Close links are still maintained with families and home visits continue, as they are needed.
- Multi agency working is maintained.
- The named Physiotherapist for each child will complete a report for the Statutory Assessment of the child if appropriate.

### Mile End Hospital

Bancroft Road, London E1 4DG

Tel: 020 8223 8874

Fax: 020 8223 8808

## Parental Engagement in Schools and Early Years Settings

### Parent Information Point (PIP)

Parent Information Point (PIP) meetings are for parents of children at key transition points in their education. PIP sessions can be held in schools, nurseries, children's centres or community settings.

PIP sessions give parents the opportunity to share their experiences through discussion or small group activities. Time is also given to introduce parents to 10 Top Tips for key transition points.

A key part of every PIP session is the "Marketplace" which provides extensive information about local services for families including: childcare; borough wide initiatives; health; education; sport/leisure activities and family support services. All information can be taken home in PIP carrier bags along with other free items.

Localised training is available each term for staff identified to facilitate a PIP session at their setting. Further support in planning, co facilitating and evaluating the session may be arranged with the Parent Support Coordinator (PSP).

If you would like further information about PIP, please contact your local PSP:

LAPs 1 & 2

Tel: 020 7364 1533

LAPs 3 & 4

Tel: 020 7364 6398

LAPs 5 & 6

Tel: 020 7364 1390

LAPs 7 & 8

Tel: 020 7364 7397

Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent  
London E14 2BG

### Portage Service

Portage is a home teaching service that offers weekly home teaching advice and support to parents who have children under five years of age with additional needs.

The service is part of both the Early Years Service and the Integrated Service for Disabled Children and works in partnership with other professionals within education, health, social care and the voluntary sector.

Service aims:

- To support parents in developing Portage teaching skills in order that they can assist their child's development.
- To enable parents to participate in planning and carrying out activities with their children.
- To listen to, and support parental concerns with regard to their child's additional needs.
- To increase parent's confidence supporting their child and to celebrate each new skill acquired.

The Service works within the guidance of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

## The Portage Process

The progress of all children receiving Portage is assessed weekly, and teaching continues until Portage ceases when the child enters an early years setting or school.

Support is given to assist the child's transition into early years settings or schools, first by accompanying families on visits, then attending planning meetings and the first review meetings.

An 'All About Me' book is produced which is intended to familiarise staff with the child. It will explain the child's likes, dislikes, strengths and needs.

The book also belongs to the child and has photos of family members and their home environment which offers some reassurance during the transition period.

## SEN Centre

Gladstone Place

1 Ewart Place, London E3 5EQ

Tel: 020 7364 6491

## Early Years Speech and Language Therapy Team

The Early Communication Team is a team of speech and language therapists and bilingual co workers. They provide support and information about speech, language and communication development for people working with children and families. The team also works directly with children, families and settings when there are specific difficulties relating to language and/or communication development.

They may become involved at any time from birth up until the end of reception.

Their main activities include:

- Assessment of children's speech, language and communication. This is often carried out through observation in various settings as

well as through formal and informal assessment.

- Advice to others about how to support children's communication development through adaptations to the environment and/or specific activities.
- Liaison and joint planning with other services to ensure the best communication environment is provided for the child.
- Direct intervention with children and families working towards specific targets, this may be carried out in a group or on an individual basis. This work would always involve a significant adult, for example parent/Learning Support Assistant/nursery nurse.
- Providing formal training around communication development.
- Training and support for staff running 'Boom Bang Bees' groups. These are open access groups for families and young children aiming to support early communication through music and singing.

The team aims to provide a seamless service delivering good outcomes for all children. It is essential therefore that transition points and transfers are appropriately planned and executed. This is achieved by:

- Involving the parent/carer and where appropriate the child in decision making leading up to the transition.
- Providing clear information about the transfer process to all relevant agencies.
- Consultation with new services or settings to ensure that relevant information relating to the child is made available.
- Ensuring all administrative procedures are carefully adhered to.

## Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

Early Communication Team

Mile End Hospital

1st Floor, Grove Building

Bancroft Road, London E1 4DG

Tel: 020 8223 8943

Email: [Sltdadmin@thpct.nhs.uk](mailto:Sltdadmin@thpct.nhs.uk)

## Vision Impairment Service

The Vision Impairment Team provides a service for families with visually impaired babies and children from birth to Year 11.

### Early Years

Following a diagnosis a member of the team will work in partnership with families and provide ongoing support through regular home visits. Early support aims to:

- Help parents come to terms with their child's visual loss.
- Help parents to understand the diagnosis and the implications.
- Support families in establishing the wearing of glasses (if appropriate).
- Provide information about available support services.
- Liaise with families to feed back information to the hospital/CDT.
- Support families with understanding their child's development and ways in which to support it with activities and games. (Based on the Developmental Journal.)

The service is involved in supporting families and children with transition into a variety of early year's settings.

This includes transitions:

- from home into settings
- between settings
- from settings to schools.

The service is involved in a range of transition work which aims to ensure that transitions are successful for individual children and their families.

This involves:

- Working closely with the families to inform them of the possible options for early years settings available.
- Working with parents and the Lead Professional for children with complex needs to plan transitions.
- Working with and supporting the inclusion coordinators for early years settings to plan transitions between settings and school.
- Liaising with agencies involved.
- Advising on appropriate resources to support transitions for individual children, with particular regard for the classroom layout and school environment and how this will impact on a visually impaired pupil.
- Advising and supporting early years settings with visually impaired children to be aware of a child's visual needs and how to reduce visual barriers.
- Providing and accessing appropriate training on early years practise for staff to ensure successful transitions for visually impaired children.

### Sensory Impairment Team

Support for Learning Service

85 Harford Street, London E1 4PY

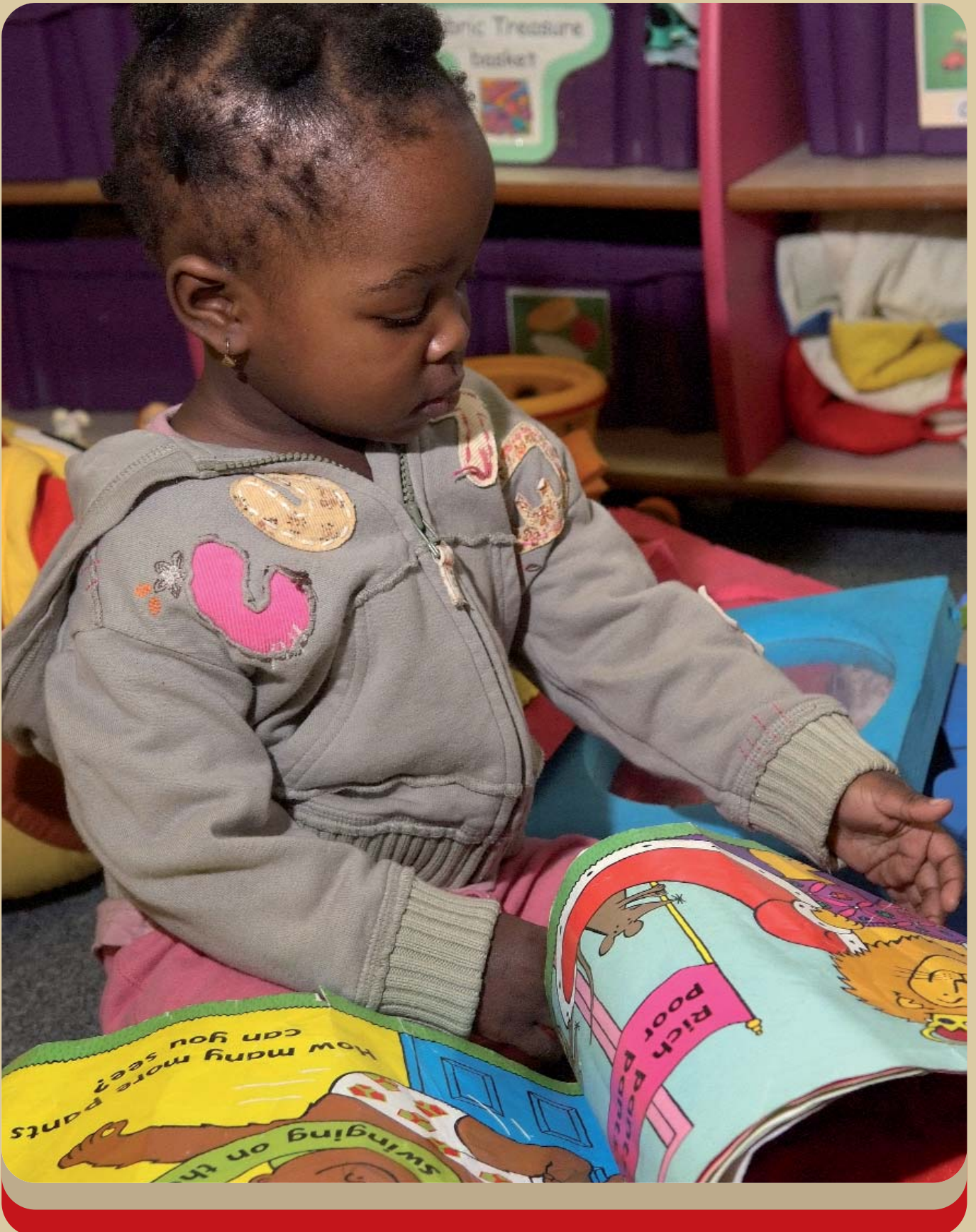
Tel: 020 7364 6467

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For details of all settings, schools and children's centres in Tower Hamlets, please log on to [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/fis](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/fis) or contact the Family Information Service on 020 7364 6495, email [fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk)



# Appendices





# Guidance for using the All About... Books

The All About... Books are intended to be used at all points of transition for babies and children between home, settings and schools. The book invites children and their parents to share what they would like schools and settings to know about them. The booklet belongs to the children and their parents and so schools and settings will need to ask for permission to make photocopies.

Most parents use these books independently. However, schools and settings may wish to offer support, for example, during a parent and toddler session, toy library, or during an English as a second or other language (ESOL) class. The underlying principle is that it includes the child's voice. Parents are key in ensuring this by offering their perspectives: they can choose how to fill it in.

Settings and schools use the book as an opportunity to appreciate, value and build on children's unique experiences from home. Practitioners have the opportunity to know more about, and value, different styles of parenting. Strong partnerships with parents in caring for and educating children are established. Planning and support are rooted firmly in individual children's needs and interests.

These are the pages and prompts from the All About... book.

## Caring for my child

*This page is about your child's feelings:*

How will staff know how your child is feeling? Do they have any worries or concerns? What calms them? What motivates or excites them? What helps them to feel secure and confident? How do they feel about starting in a new place?

## Family and other special people

*This page is about family and friends:*

What do you like your child to be called? Are they already friends with another child in the group or class? Are there other special people in their life – perhaps a close grandparent or a childminder? Are there any family pets?

## Individual Needs

*This page is about how best to help your child and what helps them to be independent:*

Does your child have any individual ways of communicating – perhaps special words, sounds, gestures or signs? Will practitioners need to support your child with moving, eating or toileting? Does your child have any medical needs staff need to know about? Do they have any allergies?

## Interests, Likes and Dislikes

*This page is about what your child likes/dislikes, recent experiences they have had and any particular interests they have.*

Has there been any special events in the family – a new baby or a celebration? Have they been on a trip or a holiday? Does your child have any favourite foods or strong dislikes? Are there any particular activities they enjoy – swimming, cooking, making things?





# All About \_\_\_\_\_

You could put a photo of your child here or they could draw a picture of themselves.

## My Unique Child

# How you can use this book

Now that your child is going to begin childcare, playgroup or school you can use this book to tell staff anything you would like them to know.

Where ever your child is going it is important that staff know all about them so that they can make sure that they can provide the care and education that is best for them.

## Enjoy making this book together

There are headings on some of the pages but you can add your own pages if you want to. There are also some ideas of the kinds of information you may like to include but just include what you think it is important. You can put photos and drawings in too.

Very definitely let your child help you to decide what needs to be put in.

You will have the opportunity to talk to staff about anything that is confidential that you don't want to put in this book.

Parents will use this book in different ways. The most important thing is that staff can appreciate your child's uniqueness!



# Caring for my child

**This page is about your child's feelings.**

**How will staff know how your child is feeling?**

**Do they have any worries or concerns?**

**What calms them? What motivates or excites them?**

**What helps them to feel secure and confident?**

**How do they feel about starting in a new place?**

# Family and other special people

This page is about family and friends.

What do you like your child to be called?

Are they already friends with another child in the group or class?

Are there other special people in their life – perhaps a close grandparent or a childminder?

Are there any family pets?

# Individual needs

This page is about how best to help your child and what helps them to be independent.

Does your child have any individual ways of communicating – perhaps special words, sounds, gestures or signs?

Are there any staff will need to support your child with moving, eating or toileting?

Does your child have any medical needs staff need to know about?

Do they have any allergies?



# Interests, likes and dislikes

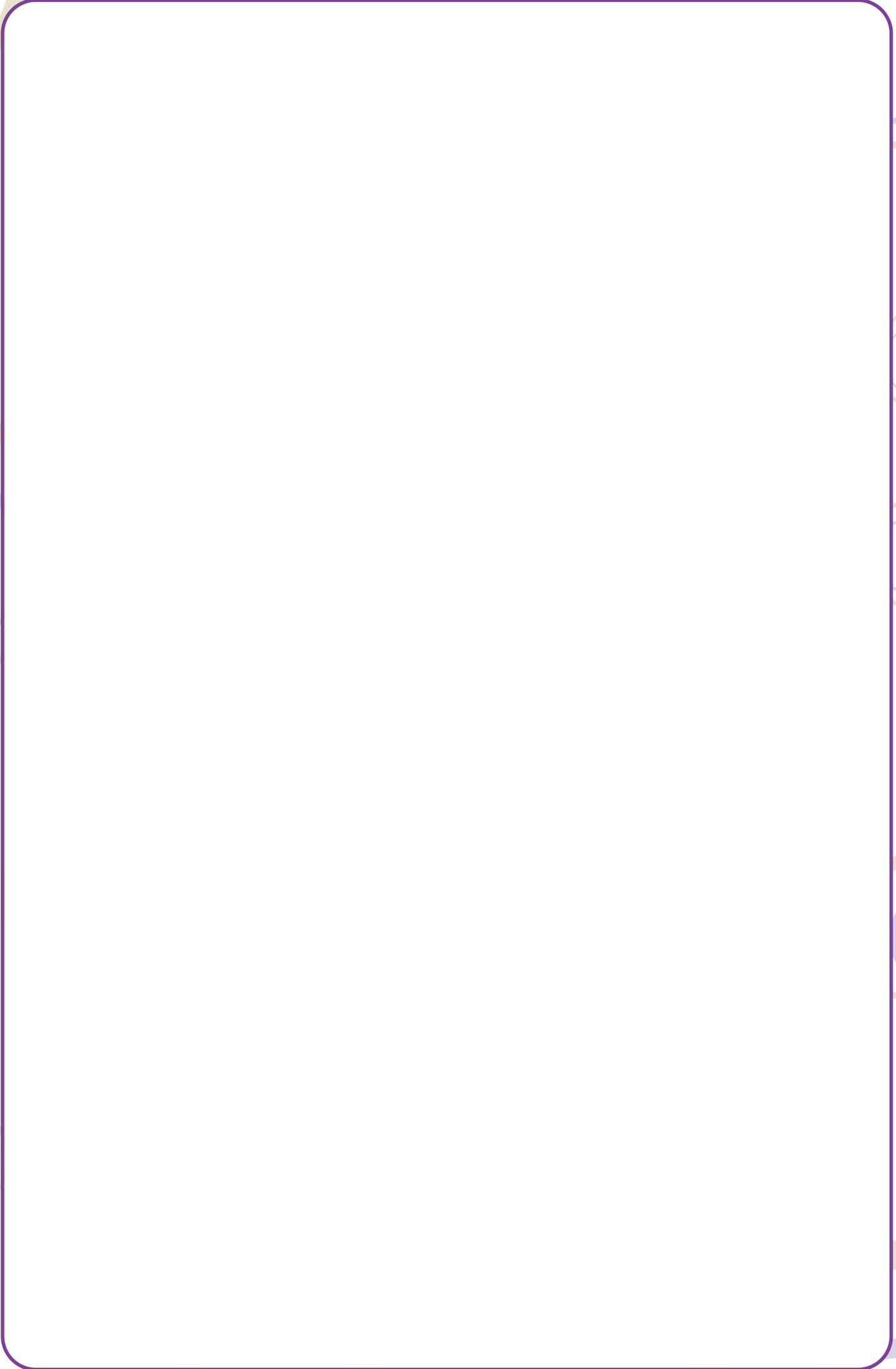
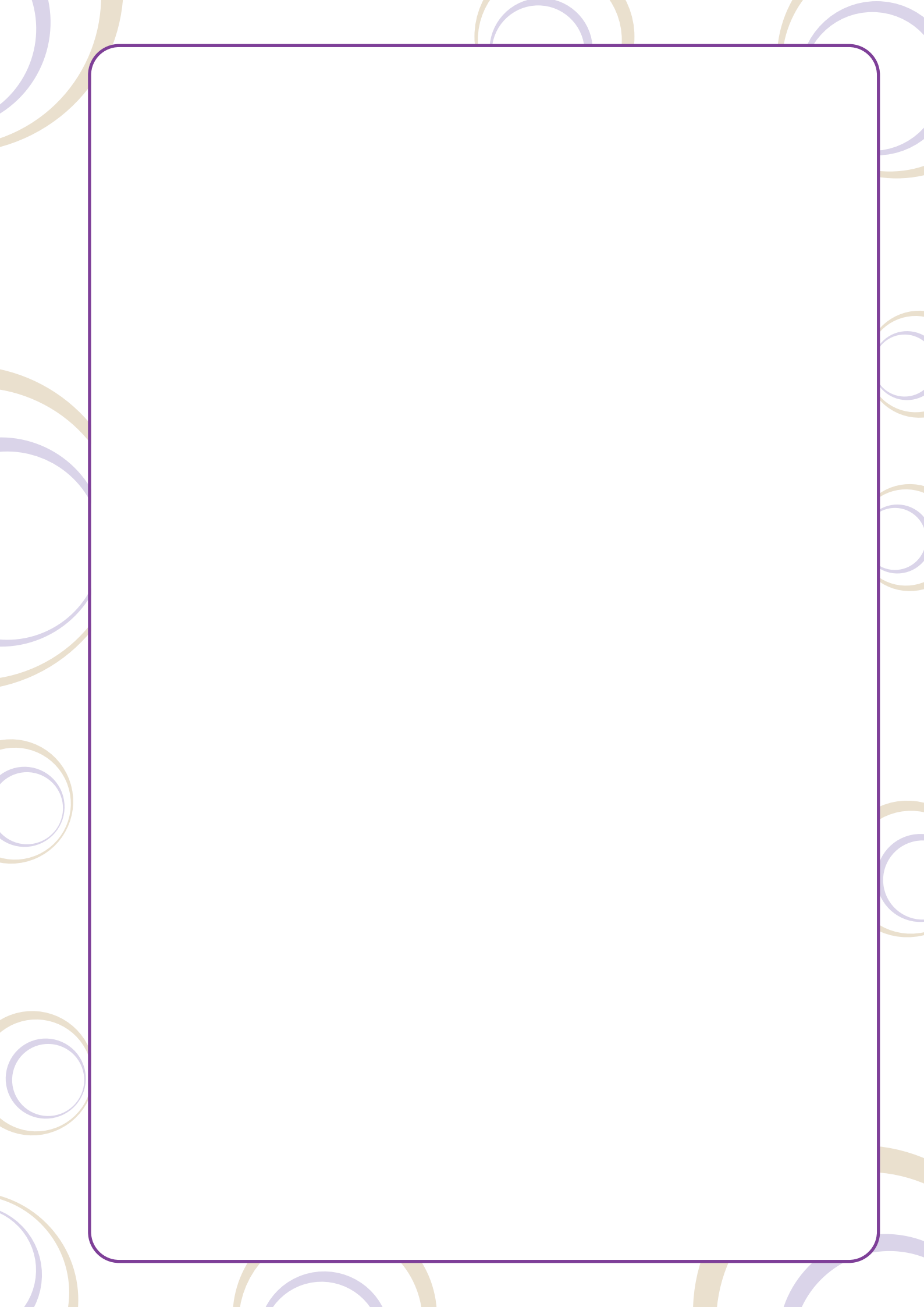
This page is about what your child likes/dislikes, recent experiences they have had and any particular interests they have.

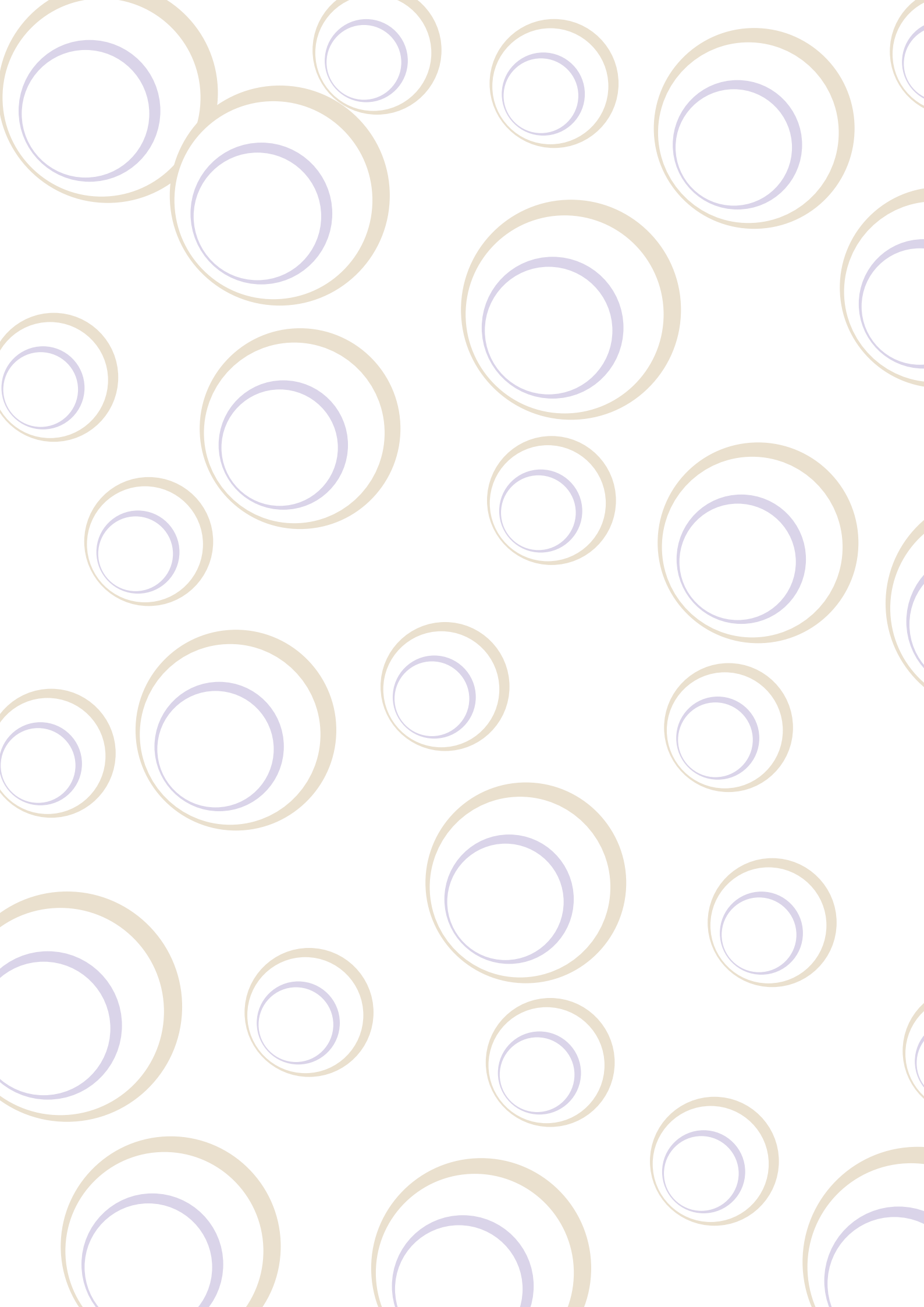
Have there been any special events in the family – a new baby or a celebration?

Have they been on a trip or a holiday?

Does your child have any favourite foods or strong dislikes?

Are there any particular activities they enjoy – swimming, cooking, making things?







# All About Kaisan Hoque

You could put a photo of your child here or they could draw a picture of themselves.



That's me →  
'Kaisan'.



↑  
That's zaina  
and she has  
curly hair  
'Kaisan'.

## My Unique Child

# How you can use this book

Now that your child is going to begin childcare, playgroup or school you can use this book to tell staff anything you would like them to know.

Where ever your child is going it is important that staff know all about them so that they can make sure that they can provide the care and education that is best for them.

## Enjoy making this book together

There are headings on some of the pages but you can add your own pages if you want to. There are also some ideas of the kinds of information you may like to include but just include what you think it is important. You can put photos and drawings in too.

Very definitely let your child help you to decide what needs to be put in.

You will have the opportunity to talk to staff about anything that is confidential that you don't want to put in this book.

Parents will use this book in different ways. The most important thing is that staff can appreciate your child's uniqueness!

# Caring for my child

This page is about your child's feelings.

How will staff know how your child is feeling?

Do they have any worries or concerns?

What calms them? What motivates or excites them?

What helps them to feel secure and confident?

How do they feel about starting in a new place?

Pen and paper will motivate Kaisan, he will feel secure and confident in drawing.

I am worried about Kaisan starting school because he takes time mixing with new people and doesn't like changes to his routine. To calm Kaisan you have to talk and encourage him and make him understand.

Kaisan is a very fussy eater and I am very worried what he will do at school because he doesn't have any favourite food at home we spend a lot of time feeding him and he won't feed himself apart from having crisps. (Mum).

'My son depends on me a lot to feed himself, and he needs a lot of help in independent skills.' He needs support and encouragement to do things. (Dad).

6 Kaisan gets frightened of the puppets. He likes animals but is very cautious to take them out of a drawer. 9

6 I love Zeina she is my sister 9 'Kaisan'

6 Kaisan has an excellent relationship with his sister Zeina. He always talks about her + includes her if she is in the group 9  
Perin



# Family and other special people

This page is about family and friends.

What do you like your child to be called?

Are they already friends with another child in the group or class?

Are there other special people in their life – perhaps a close grandparent or a childminder?

Are there any family pets?

Kaisan is the first child of his parents and has a little sister that he is very close with. He was born in England but ethnic background is Bangladeshi. He went to Bangladesh only once, for his uncle's wedding. All his family are in England.

Kaisan doesn't have any particular friends but his favourite cousins are 'Yasir' and 'Ehsan'.

Kaisan's aunty is very involved with Kaisan and he loves her company and to be cared by her (mum)



← me and my little sister Zaina.



↑ my mum and dad.

my aunt Rubina. →



# Individual needs

This page is about how best to help your child and what helps them to be independent.

Does your child have any individual ways of communicating – perhaps special words, sounds, gestures or signs?

Are there any staff will need to support your child with moving, eating or toileting?

Does your child have any medical needs staff need to know about?

Do they have any allergies?

Kaisan isn't very independent, he expects things to be done for him, he needs a lot of praise and encouragement.

He communicates by talking and speaks English and a little Bengali.

Kaisan gets frustrated quickly when he can't do things right e.g. riding a bike, he'll do it once or twice then he'll get frustrated to do it again.

Kaisan has a halal diet. (Mum)

Once you get to know Kaisan, he does talk a lot and he will be always asking questions about everything. (Dad).

“Kaisan needs to be encouraged to be independent”

(Perin Dobran)

“Kaisan repeats everything you say to him.”

He likes to repeat the words so that he can feel confident to use them”

(Perin Dobran)

“I can share + take turns, but sometimes find it difficult if it is my favourite toy”

“Kaisan”

“Kaisan is often anxious throughout the session. He is anxious if children dress-up or put masks on. He needs constant re-assurance that it is OK”

(Perin Dobran)



# Interests, likes and dislikes

This page is about what your child likes/dislikes, recent experiences they have had and any particular interests they have.

Have there been any special events in the family – a new baby or a celebration?

Have they been on a trip or a holiday?

Does your child have any favourite foods or strong dislikes?

Are there any particular activities they enjoy – swimming, cooking, making things?

Kaisan is very good at drawing and he enjoys it as well.

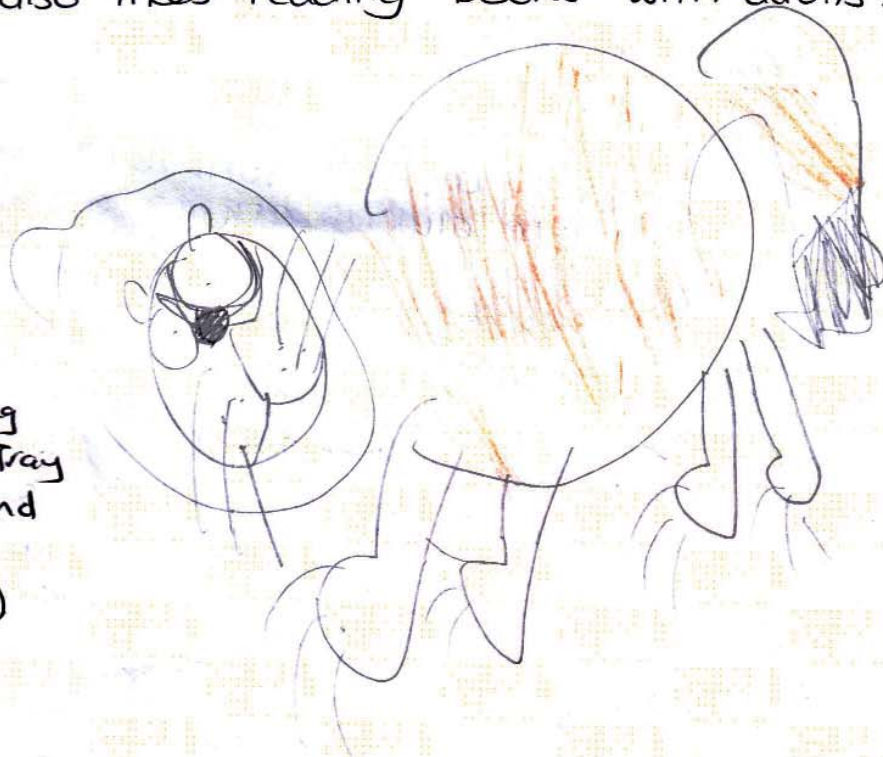
He likes playing with animals.

At the moment Kaisan's favourite toy is Mickey mouse and

Tigger, he likes watching a lot of cartoons.

Kaisan also likes reading books with adults. (mum)

I like  
lions.  
'Kaisan'



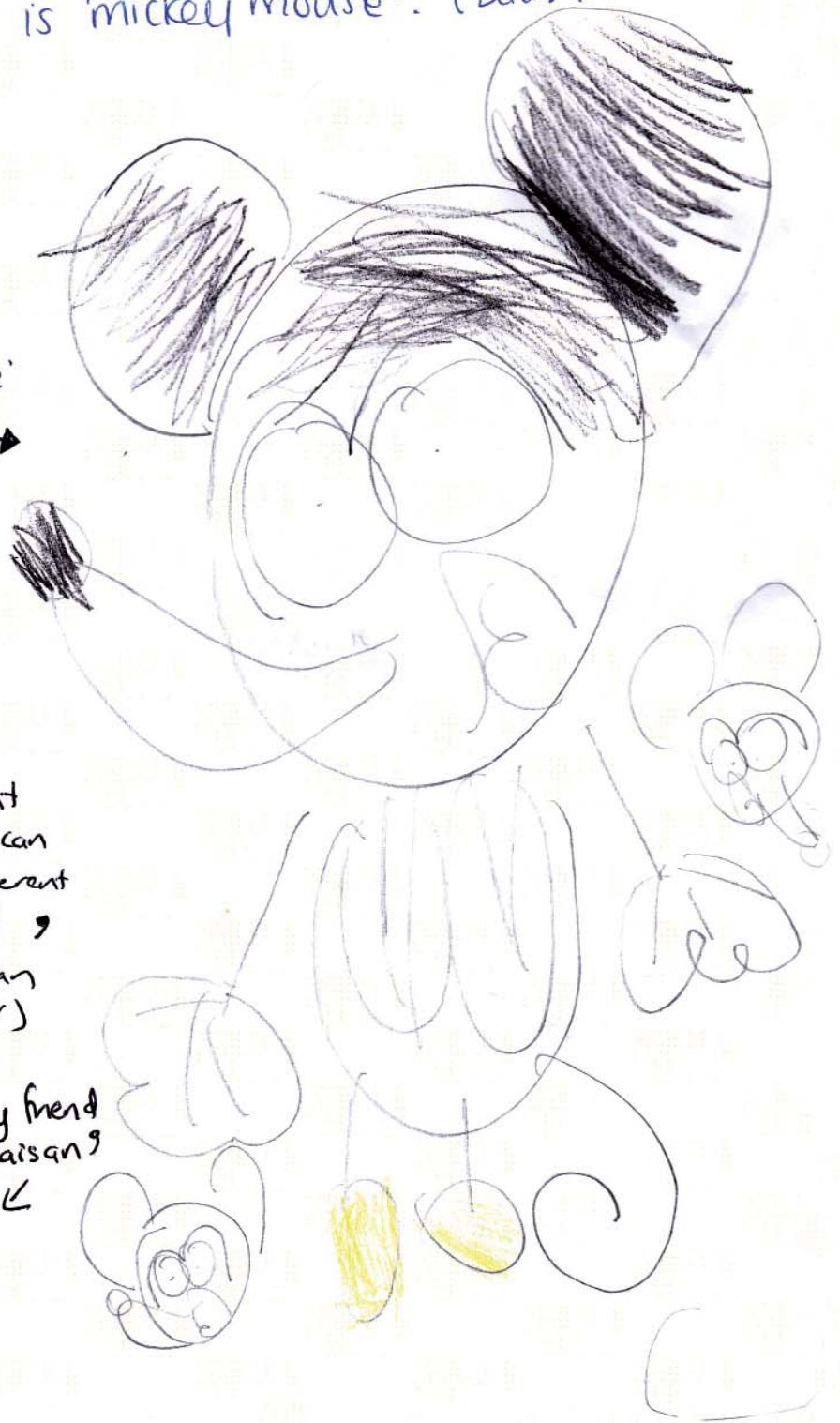
'I really  
enjoy playing  
at the water tray  
with my friend  
Thamin'  
(Kaisan)

'I like making the  
children laugh.'  
(Kaisan)



'Kaisan loves going out to the park and also to the farm to see the animals. We often do that every weekends. He also likes all the disney characters and his got all the toys but his favourite at the moment is 'mickey mouse'. (Dad).

This is 'mickey mouse' drawn by Kaisan. →



6 Kaisan has excellent drawing skills. He can draw lots of different animals in detail,

Perin Dobran  
(Playleader)

6 My friend Kaisan





← This is my favourite  
Picture, I use it  
on the number line  
at Wapping playgroup  
(Kaisan)

# Guidance for using the Diary

## How to use the Diary

The Diary is used for every child to create a picture of their experiences, interests, learning and development both at home and in their setting or school. This includes any other activities that the child takes part in, for example at the local children's centre or at an out of school club. The child's key person is responsible for encouraging and supporting contributions from the child and family and coordinating input from other practitioners. Some parents may need support with this process to begin with.

The Diary belongs to the child who may choose to take it home as often as they wish, to add to and share with their families. The Diary should be accessible to the child at all times. The child may choose to share their Diary at times with another adult or another child and share aspects of themselves and their lives. When a child leaves a setting the Diary should go with them. It is hoped that schools, settings and parents will appreciate its value, and therefore, the child will choose to bring it to their next educational setting.

The Diary is a record of a child's relationships, interests, learning and development. It can include every aspect of a child's life at home and in the setting. For example, it may include:

- family members and friends
- special events at home, for example, a new baby
- special events in the setting
- places they have visited
- things they like doing
- things they have made
- achievements
- how the child's needs are met, for example eating, sleeping...
- likes and dislikes

This information may be documented in different ways: children have many different ways of expressing themselves other than spoken language. They need to be able to contribute to the Diary using a range of these different ways. They may communicate their experiences, their thoughts and their feelings through body language, movement and dance, reactions and responses, behaviour, using paint and other media and in their play. This can be captured using photographs and by making observations.



# Photographs

A photograph or a series of photographs can more easily show the different ways that children express themselves. Children can also take their own photographs of what is significant to them. Holding the camera gives children the opportunity to show what is interesting or important or of some concern to them.

There could be photographs of:

- a child with their mother and comments added by the mother describing the care routine and the child's preferences, for example being held, going to sleep, being fed
- in the setting, a child's preferred area of the room or favourite activities both inside and outside
- a child's involvement and independence in different routines
- their family or friends, and other significant people in the child's life
- experiences out of the setting home, for example a family outing or special occasion.

# Artefacts

These may include small items of significance from a visit, for example a bus ticket, party hat, or a leaf from the park.

# Children's work

Occasional pieces of work chosen by the child may be added to the Diary. However, it is important to document the processes of the child's learning and to bear in mind that an end product may not demonstrate this as well as annotated photographs or an observation.

# Practitioners' contributions

Brief annotations should be included to support the photographs, artefacts and children's work. Adults should not assume a child's voice and write as if they were the child. Annotations may include what the child says about chosen photographs, pieces of work etc that they have decided to include in their Diary.

# Parents' contributions

It is very important that we listen to what parents tell us about their children. Their reflections on what has been added to the Diary at home and in the setting helps build a more genuine, holistic picture of the child.

# Case Study

## Archie's Diary

Archie attends Avebury Playgroup in Bethnal Green. Denise, the manager, introduced the use of Diaries so that information about children's everyday lives and their interests could be shared between home and playgroup. The Diaries provide an important way to really listen to children and to find out more about what is important to them; what they are interested in, what they think and how they feel.

In the playgroup time is made each week for the children to add to their Diaries. They may select photos which have been taken of them at play or, sometimes, they may add a drawing or 'souvenir' from an outing or an activity. Staff write in the Diaries what children say about the additions they have made. They also annotate children's additions, where appropriate, to note their significance. The children can take their Diaries home as often as they wish.

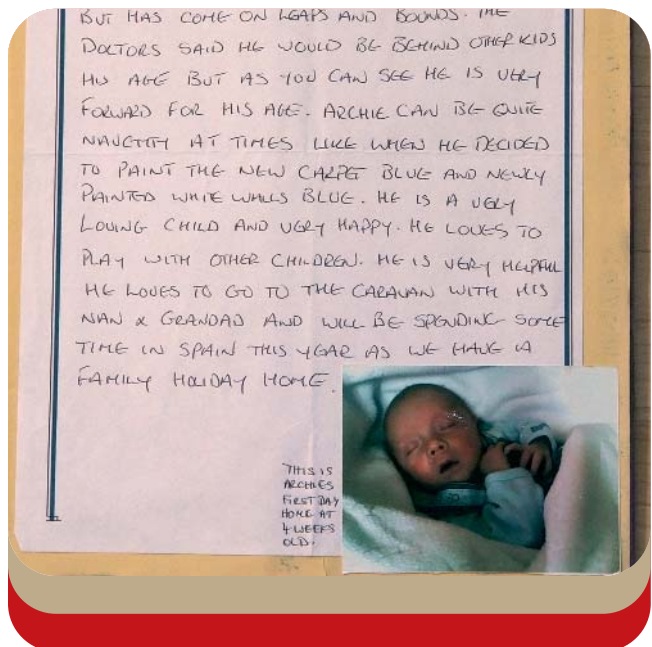
Archie, Emma, (Archie's mother) and Carol, (his nanny) have put many things in his diary with him. There are photos of Christmas with great grandma, a holiday at the caravan and of Archie's dog, Brandy. At the beginning of the Diary is Archie's life story which Emma and Carol wrote together. It is a moving account which includes their hopes and aspirations for him and their delight in the progress he has made. Archie was born prematurely and the hospital staff suggested that he may take longer to reach his milestones. However, it has not turned out like this at all!



Denise says: "The kind of information that is passed between parents and the playgroup is valuable because we get more background knowledge of each child's family, upbringing, likes and dislikes. We gain information from the parent's view of their child and communication is open – this is helpful because it's like comparing notes and can make it a lot easier to talk about each child's progress and their stage of development. Also, these Diaries are valuable for both the parents and the playgroup as it shows what activities the children seem to enjoy the most, which means planning can be done more easily around each child's interest, making it a lot easier for children to reach their goals."



Archie is an energetic child who loves coming to playgroup. He takes part in a wide range of activities both in and out of doors. He particularly likes playing with his friend, Jesse, and they like to play with action figures together as well role playing the characters of the action figures. Archie likes building with bricks, which he plays with both indoors and outside. He also likes to play with trains and tracks, and cars and scooters.



Emma chats regularly with Denise about how Archie has spent his time in the playgroup. However, she also really values the Diary which includes lots of photographs of Archie with notes about what he has been doing during sessions. Sometimes there are surprises.

Emma says: "I didn't know he could use the computer until I saw the photo in the diary. He can use the mouse as well!"

Emma can chat with Archie at home about all aspects of playgroup life using the pictures as a reference. He talks about his friends as well who are often in the photos too. Emma realised how much time Archie and Jesse spent in each others' company by looking at the photos with him and

talking about them. Archie shows his Diary to everyone who comes to the house, and Archie enjoys spending time sharing his book with practitioners and with other children in the playgroup as well.

Carol says: "I wish we had had this when Emma was at school. It's something you will keep for life."



# Transition Plans

Transition planning is key to successful transition. Children with additional needs are likely to require a more detailed level of planning. The following Transition Plan form has been developed to record the information discussed and actions agreed at the planning meeting prior to the child's transition. An example of how the form might be used is also included.







<b>Specific resources and approaches used that will continue</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>
Aids Used eg Hearing Aids/Glasses	
Furniture/Other Equipment	
Behaviour Plan	
Medication and/or Care Plan	
Use of Information Communication Technology	
Communication (eg signing)	
Learning	
Toiletting	
Eating and Drinking	
Other	

Training, resources and adaptations that need to be put in place in setting/school before the child starts	Action Plan
Building Adaptations	
Classroom Organisation/Space	
Staff Training (eg signing)	
Manual Handling	
Resources/Positive Images of Disability	
Arrangements for Physical Activities/ Use of Outdoor Space	
Fire Safety	
Statement Support/Teaching Assistant Arrangements	
Other	

**Plan for transition visits for the child and family and staff**

**Information for the family (for example, name of Inclusion Coordinator, start date) or how this is communicated to families**





Specific resources and approaches used that will continue	Action Plan
Aids Used eg Hearing Aids/Glasses	Nadine uses bilateral hearing aids. She wears aids at home and is beginning to cooperate with her key person to wear them in playgroup. Need to support her in increasing the time she wears aids in playgroup initially building the time she wears aids to 15 minutes.
Furniture/Other Equipment	
Behaviour Plan	
Medication and/or Care Plan	Health Care Plan in place to manage her Asthma. Plan to be transferred to school. Parents to notify key person if any changes in treatment and Health Care Plan will then be updated.
Use of Information Communication Technology	
Communication (eg signing)	Recommendation that basic Makaton Signs or Signalong used with Nadine to support her communication. She would also benefit from visual supports such as objects, props and photographs.
Learning	Recommend that staff use visual supports, signs and gestures to support verbal instructions and information. Consider positioning during group sessions so Nadine has clear view of teacher/adults.
Toileting	Nadine requires nappy changing facilities. School and parents to explore a toileting programme once Nadine has settled.
Eating and Drinking	Nadine is eating mostly soft foods and needs to be gradually introduced to a wider range of foods. Specialist Speech and Language Therapist to advise school.
Other	

Training, resources and adaptations that need to be put in place in setting/school before the child starts	Action Plan
Building Adaptations	
Classroom Organisation/Space	Hearing Impairment Team to advise on meeting Nadine's hearing needs in school environment; acoustics, positioning, lighting.
Staff Training (eg signing)	Nursery staff will be receiving Signalong training to use with all children Summer Term
Manual Handling	
Resources/Positive Images of Disability	SENCO to order books and posters reflecting positive images of hearing impairment, and purchase hearing aids for dolls.
Arrangements for Physical Activities/ Use of Outdoor Space	
Fire Safety	
Statement Support/Teaching Assistant Arrangements	Statement finalised, 20 hours support allocated.
Other	



### **Plan for transition visits for the child and family and staff**

- School has arranged a home visit for 11th June. A start date will be discussed at this visit.
- School to identify key person/TA to arrange visits to school for Nadine until the end of term
- TA to visit playgroup 18th June to read a story
- Heema, Key Person Playgroup, to visit school with Nadine, take photos and make a 'My New School' book. June 26th 10am
- Shirley (Speech and Language Therapist) to visit Nadine in playgroup and advise meeting her communication needs
- Adam (Sensory Impairment Team) to contact parents re: replacement hearing aids and school re: advice on physical environment.
- School to organise nappy changing facilities

### **Information for the family (for example, name of Inclusion Coordinator, start date) or how this is communicated to families**

- School SENCO – Sofia Begum
- Signalong course available to parents in September
- Nadine and family invited to 'New Families' session in school July 3rd 9.30

# Acknowledgements

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