



Moving Up from Nursery to Reception – supporting a smooth transition.

A guide for social workers, carers, nurseries and schools.

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In the current circumstance moving up is not happening in the same way this year. However, building relationships and clear communication with a child's school **before** they start attending is still the key. Holding a Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting before the child starts, is good practice. A Transition PEP is completed early June and will ensure robust planning is in place to support both the child and the carer /parent. It gives an opportunity to begin to know each other better, develop and understanding of the child.

How can nursery help with the move?

- Whether or not your child is returning to nursery before they start school a child's keyworker, or another trusted staff member will be able to support the transition. Parents / Carers should speak to the nursery about the support that they feel a child needs, this may be sensitivities such as loud noises and the current family situation. Nursery staff have supported many families so no question is too big or too small and it will help you in your preparing them in entering this new exciting new place.
- School routines are a good thing to talk about and also familiarise your child with the uniform that they will be wearing, check they can dress themselves – you could show them photographs of children wearing the uniform on the school website or get it ordered early (bearing in mind that they could have a growth spurt before September!).
- If a lot of children from your child's nursery will be moving to the same school, then perhaps they could organise for the Reception teacher to make a video for the nursery to share or set up an online get-together.
- Nurseries often mark the transition with special leaving events. While a gathering may not be possible before the start of term, you could discuss what can be done to celebrate the move once restrictions are lifted or eased.

How can I build familiarity with the school?

- If your child attended the school nursery or has siblings at the school, then they have a head start because they already know what it's like inside the building. Talk to them about different aspects, such as the big climbing frame or the book corner so that they continue to think about the school and have positive associations with it.
- If your child is completely new, check out the school website, some have virtual tours that they will be in to help familiarise them – especially their classroom and outdoor area. You can also walk them past the school so that they are familiar with their route to school and the building.
- Often schools conduct home visits to meet you and your child in a familiar setting to introduce themselves and find out more about your child, such as any favourite toys or interests. While this may not be currently possible, they can choose to have a phone chat, video call or to delay visits until restrictions are eased.

What do I need to know ?

Information that you may need to know in advance includes: (to be discussed at the transition PEP)

Remember to imagine yourself in your child's shoes

- What the school's settling-in procedure is – whether they will gradually build up the hours they attend and whether you can stay with your child. This is likely to be different from usual to consider the disruption children have had to their routines during lockdown.
- The name of your child's teacher and any other staff they will be regularly interacting with – photos are a must!
- As how the school foster secure attachments? What is done to make your child feel safe and secure? How is kindness shown? How will your child's achievements be celebrated?
- Has enough information been shared for school to have an understanding of your child's lived experiences and how they impact? Can you give specific examples of what soothes your child if they get dysregulated? This will help them plan and put in place approaches which are attachment and trauma informed and do not shame your child for developmental gaps
- What does a typical school day involve?
- Where you need to take/collect your child and when?
- What uniform and equipment they will need, such as PE kit and spare clothes?
- Whether your child can bring in a special comforter or sensory object?
- Whether you can request for your child to be kept with a special friend or sibling?
- What the school's expectations are?
- What happens at mealtimes, including menus or what they can bring in their packed lunch?

Remember - Toileting (and handwashing), Food and play feature very strongly. Walk the child's experience

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How will you know that children's emotional well-being is fostered?

Samples of what you may see. These can be explored further in the Autumn Term PEP:

Children show enjoyment, they are having fun and taking pleasure in interacting with others and in activities.

Children show curiosity and use their senses to explore the world around them.

The children look happy, smile or laugh easily, engage spontaneously in chatting or even singing.

Children are relaxed with no visible signs of tension.

They initiate activities, seek challenge and show a 'can do' attitude.

Children have energy and vitality.

Children are lively and expressive. They radiate. They move around the room with confidence.

Children are comfortable around the adults and other children. They have a good sense of humour and will laugh and share a joke.

Children show pride in what they have accomplished.

What can you do to support your child with the transition?

Talk about up and coming change with you child and approach transitions in a positive and exciting way. Help children express their feelings and emotions about the change and acknowledge their feelings.

Help your child celebrate memories of their current situation as well as look forward to the future.

A book of familiar photos that a child can take with them for the day may also help if your child is experiencing separation anxiety. Perhaps you could add laminated photos to a key ring for your child. Making a book about school on a settling visit may be possible.

It helps if you can say goodbye in a calm and brief manner and tell your child when you will be back. Never sneak out, as this can make your child feel abandoned.

Smile! You may feel like crying inside but try not to show it.

Talk about starting school in positive terms, as something exciting and enjoyable, even if your school days weren't exactly the best of your life. Don't belittle any fears your child may have, listen to them and talk to them about their feelings.

Read stories about starting school, there are many to choose from – there is a list at the end of this factsheet, and you could also go to the local library and borrow books?

When choosing items of clothing or uniform for school think about clothes that are easy for them to pull on and off. Try and choose shoes with Velcro fastenings as this will make them feel more independent, as they won't need to ask for help tying the laces. If possible, take your child with you when shopping for school clothes. If they have helped you to choose them, they are more likely to be happy to wear them.

Your child will be staying for lunch at school. Talk about this with your child, will you be providing packed lunches, or will they be having a school meal.

Some examples of books about starting school

At School. From the Oxford Reading Tree First Experience Collection (this has characters that may appear in your child's school reading books if your school uses this reading scheme) by Roderick Hunt and Alex Brychta

Going to School. From the Usborne Book of First Experiences by Anne Civardi and Stephen Cartwright

Harry and the Dinosaurs go to School by Ian Whybrow and Adrian Reynolds

I am Too Absolutely Small for school by Lauren Child

Lucy and Tom start school by Shirley Hughes

Further resources for carers to do with the child and information for carers/parents, settings/school are available here:

<https://www.pacey.org.uk/partnerships/starting-school-together/>