Transition in Early Years: For Parents

Transition is a space in time in which new things happen because of change. We all experience transitions in life and young children will go through a number of changes in their early education such as:

- Home to grandparents
- Home to nursery/childminder
- Home to school
- Nursery/childminder to nursery/childminder
- Nursery/childminder to school

Your role as a parent/carer is important to support children to get ready for these transitions. Some children take transitions in their stride and some children need support. There are many things you can do to help to ensure it is a positive experience.

It is important that your child has the opportunity to access the highest quality provision. As a parent or carer, you may know right away which setting will suit you and your child or you may be very undecided. The following frequently asked questions and answers will support you to make this important decision. The following information has been extracted and influenced by the Scottish Government ‘Parent Zone’.

From home to nurseries and childminders

When will my child start nursery or childminder?

All three and four-year-old children, and some two-year-olds, in England have either 15 or 30 hours per week entitlement of early learning and childcare. You can find out more information about how early learning and childcare is being delivered in Doncaster on the Families Information Service (FIS) website.

What do high quality nurseries and childminders do?

In high quality early learning and childcare settings everyone is welcomed and the atmosphere is open, caring and friendly. Children’s wellbeing is utmost and they are treated as individuals. Adults are sensitive to children’s different traits and personalities. Staff are interested in your opinions about what your child likes and dislikes. Children are encouraged to develop their own ideas, thoughts and opinions.
They are involved in a wide range of exciting activities which are helping them to develop a curiosity about the world around them. Through rich playful experiences, children are developing early language and early mathematical skills. It is clear that adults in the setting enjoy being part of children’s early learning and development.

What is learning through play?

For most children play is natural and spontaneous. Research has shown this is the best way for young children to learn. Through play young children develop their emotions, creative, social and intellectual skills. During play young children can learn about the world around them and practise new ideas and skills and solve problems. Your child will be encouraged to do all these things with friends and/or on their own, choosing from a wide range of experiences and activities. Play is rich early learning and adults provide support to enhance the learning. Learning experiences to develop language and number skills are key during play activities. Early learning and childcare is about learning, playing, exploring and having fun in a safe environment.

Where will I find a nursery or childminder?

Early learning and childcare can be delivered in a nursery setting attached to a primary school, attached to a family hub, a private nursery or voluntary nursery. Childminders also provide early learning and childcare, some operating with assistants so they can accommodate more children. Further information can be found on the Families Information Service (FIS) website.

What should I consider when choosing a nursery or childminder?

It may be useful for you to arrange at least one visit and ask for the opportunity for your child and yourself to take part in some activities. Some of these transition activities may take place online or over the telephone. Take time to ensure that the setting meets your needs and that you feel your child will be valued as an individual, feel safe, feel secure and will enjoy being in the setting. Go with your instinct. Ask yourself - do you feel happy and comfortable?

Preparing for a transition visit: virtual or in person

There will be many questions you want to ask and it might be helpful to make a list before your visit. The following are some questions that may be useful when you visit:
- What are the settling in procedures?
- How will I know that my child will be safe and happy?
- Who will look after my child and help him learn?
- What will my child do during the session?
- What activities will my child be involved in?
- What will my child learn about?
- How will I know what my child has been learning?
- What do I need to bring for my child?
- What will my child do during the session?
- Can I stay with my child?
- In what ways can I be involved?
- Can my child come to nursery if he/she is not toilet trained?
- How will the setting support my child when he/she is toilet training?
- How much will it cost me?

You should feel comfortable to ask any questions that are on your mind.

**The visit: virtual or in person**

During your visit to the setting you should see and experience the following:

- a learning environment where children are happy, motivated and engaged in play experiences, including outdoors
- a leader who wants the best for all the children and is very proud of their achievements
- lots of discussion and engagement between children and adults
- children who are curious, and inquisitive and adults support their interests
- good quality materials and resources, including some unusual items that would not be found at home
- confident, knowledgeable, approachable staff who are supportive to children and parents
- staff listening and talking with children, families and staff
- the setting feels and looks safe and secure including a secure entry system
- clear information displayed for parents including a handbook, transition procedures, links with the community and learning opportunities
- children’s art, writing and photographs of activities are on display and everyone is proud of these achievements.

During and after your visit you may wish to look at some more information about the setting. This will further help you choose the correct setting for your child. Some of the information you may find useful is:

- the current improvement plan for the setting
- most recent inspection reports available for the setting - you can download and read the latest Ofsted inspection reports [here](#)
- parent handbook
- enrolment policy
From nursery and/or childminder to school

How will my child’s school help to ensure that transitions go smoothly?

Primary teachers work closely with nurseries and childminder staff to ensure that information about your child's learning and achievements are passed on. Staff will also share other information that will help the teacher support your child's learning, for example friendship groups, preferred ways of working.

How can I help?

To help prepare your child for a good start you can:

- listen and talk to your child about this change in their lives
- involve your child in getting ready for school by helping choose the things they will need, for example their uniform, lunchbox, schoolbag
- talk to your school if you have questions or concerns
- support staff in getting to know your child, let them know about interests and health issues
- keep in touch with the school about anything that may affect your child's learning
- find out how the school will communicate with you.

You may wish to read or download Parenting across Scotland's top ten tips - starting primary school.

https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/transitions

How can I find out more about my child's school?

Attend induction events or introductory sessions - they are designed to let you and your child meet teachers and become familiar with the school. If you cannot attend an event, contact the school and ask if you can go along at another time. Some of these may be online, over the telephone or information sent in the post due to the current circumstances regarding Coronavirus.

Be prepared with a set of questions covering all the things you and your child want to know about.

Schools will have information to share with you or available on their website, including:

- Contact details – including information on how the school communicates with its parents and how parents can communicate with the school
• Information about opportunities for parents to become involved in the school and in their child's education
• A statement of the school's culture, ethos and values
• Information on curriculum, assessment and reporting
• Arrangements for support for pupils
• School's performance and achievements
• Range of school policies and practical information.