



Early Years Practice E News

Supporting Transitions in the Early Years

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Megan McConaghy
Early Years Quality Mentor

As we move into the beginning of September many children are transitioning into new Early Years settings. While this can be an exciting time for all, many can experience some challenges at this stage of transition. Children who make the move into a new setting will bring their own unique personal experiences and individual levels of readiness.



Karen Cooke
Senior Early Years Specialist

Megan McConaghy (Early Years Quality Mentor) and Karen Cooke (Senior Early Years Specialist) from Early Years Organisation for Young Children, reflect on how these individual experiences must be fully embraced and considered to ensure a smooth transition.

What does transition mean?



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Transition is the means by which children experience a smooth passage from one setting or stage to another, for example, from home/day-care to preschool or from preschool to the first year of Foundation Stage in primary school.

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Guidance on Induction and Transition in Pre-School Education and Year One
([education-ni.gov.uk](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk))



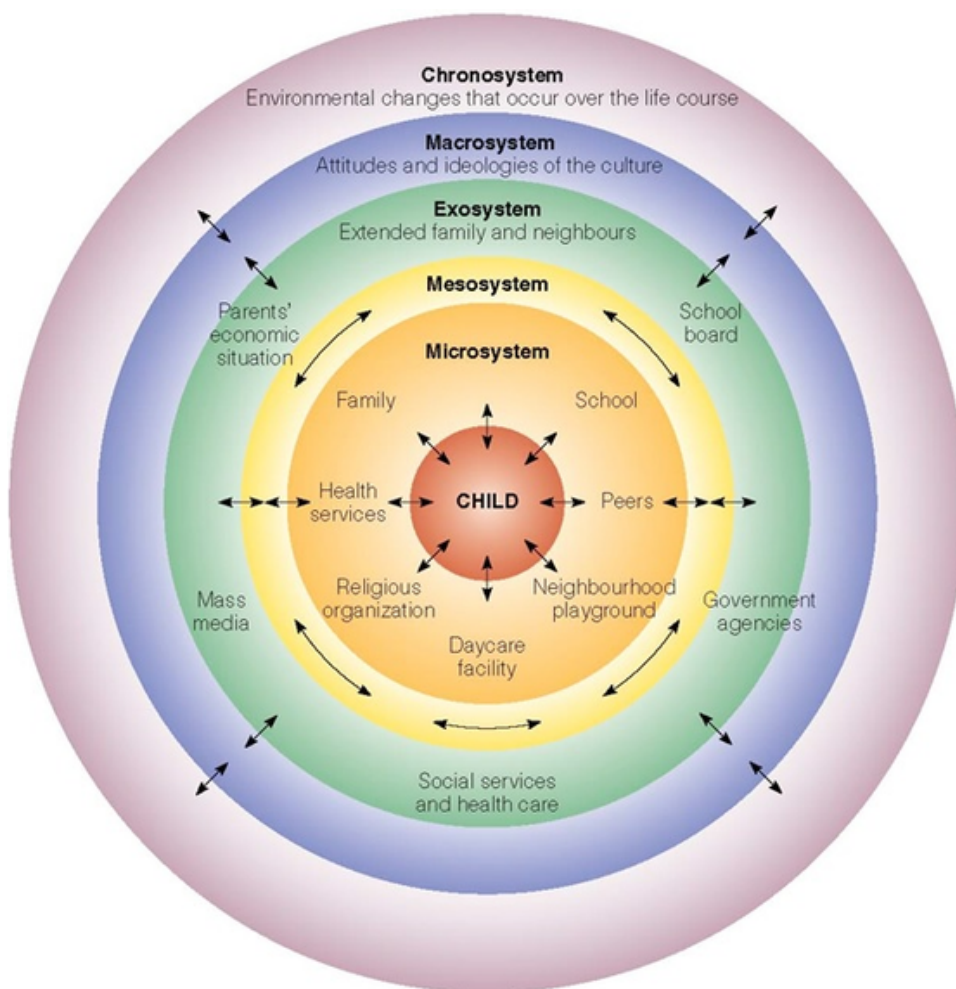
For many of us, we will go through life with a range of experiences faced by times of transition. Some of us may be starting a new job, moving to a new house or have experienced loss, often at times we will have been supported by those around us to reduce the impact of potential stress.

Young children will often experience a host of change and transitions, from moving from their cot to a bed, being fed to feeding themselves and leaving their main care giver to go to an early year's setting.

Transition is a process, It takes time to make decisions, adapt and to manage emotions of the move. We know that for our children the transition to pre-school or primary school is one of the major transitions in their lives, therefore it is important that as adults we support this by providing access to relevant information and supporting relationships.

Why is it important to support children as they experience transitions?

American Psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner believed that to look at children's development we needed to look at their immediate environment and how each system interacts with one another. Bronfenbrenner argued that how each system works together, can directly affect the child's development and learning. Bronfenbrenner goes on to state that if a child's parents or guardians take an active role in the care or school establishment which the child attends then this reinforces the growth potential.



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The transition to school together with the transition from home to an ECEC setting are the first occasions in which children experience a big cultural change, in the people around them, the ways in which they interact, their number of peers, the types of activity they engage in, and their physical surroundings.

(OECD (2017) pg. 17)

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Some children may find the transition from home to a new setting challenging while others will ease into their new surroundings and celebrate change. It is important therefore for Early Years practitioners, parents, and care givers to find ways to support children's personal, social and emotional development by engaging meaningfully with others. For practitioners this includes recognising parents as equal partners in the transition process.

How do we do this?

Below we have created some tips for consideration that can support children through transitions.

TOP TIPS FOR PRACTITIONERS

- Support consistent key relationships for children i.e. key worker system, collection of relevant information is shared.
- Consult with and involve parents and other involved professionals in the transition process.
- Develop family books to discuss with children and provide a space where these can be accessible.
- Review your working in partnership with parents' policy and procedure and evaluate if further steps could be made.
- Consider a text/phone or app service that allows for contacting parents to provide reassurance during the settling in period.

We appreciate that times of transition can be an anxious time for parents and children alike, however when effective measures and practices are established this can reduce levels of stress ensuring that children have positive experiences that enables them to reach their full potential.



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