Ensuring smooth transitions

Ruth Moore
Freedom to Learn Network Ltd
Transition is.............

....the process of changing from one state or condition to another....
Aim of this workshop

• For teachers to feel supported
• To strengthen the transition process for your school from Nursery, Reception and Year 1
• To increase Year 1 teacher’s knowledge and confidence about the use of EYFS Profile data
• A time to plan
Our job is not to prepare children for the next stage of education, but it is to prepare children for the transition from one learning environment to another, from one educator to another, from one set of expectations to another. That preparation is done not by having false and unreasonable expectations of children, but by allowing them to flourish in an appropriate environment which builds their self-confidence and self-esteem. In this way, when the point of transition is reached, the child can handle it with confidence and eager anticipation.

(Julie Fisher)
Statutory requirements

Year 1 teachers must be given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child’s skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. These should inform a dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child’s stage of development and learning needs and assist with planning of activities in Year 1.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012
Characteristics of effective learning

• **Playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things and ‘have a go’

• **Active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

• **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things
Transitions are challenging because children have to:

- Get to know their way around a new environment
- Share adult time
- Get used to a new set of expectations for behaviour
- Adjust to new routines

Some children are more able to cope physically and emotionally than others
Children will feel more positive about making transitions if they:

• know what to expect
• are well prepared for the new experience and are motivated to participate
• know someone in the new setting
• are able to understand what is happening
• are allowed to take things at their own pace
• are encouraged and supported by others
What are the tensions?

**Reception**
- Active curriculum
- Integrated
- Key person
- Individual/small gps
- Child initiated
- Free flow access to outdoors
- Individual child focus

**Year 1**
- Passive/listening curriculum
- Subject based
- Smaller no. of adults
- Larger groups
- Adult directed
- Timetable breaks
- Whole school target driven focus
Key features of transition are

- partnerships with children, parents and other practitioners
- carefully managed transitions (policy and settling in curriculum)
- observation based assessment used to inform planning
- well planned learning environment which promotes child initiated/independent cross curricular learning in and outdoors
Time to think

Discuss what you currently do to support the transition of children from:

• Nursery to Reception Class
• Reception to Year 1
In Reggio creativity is at the heart of all learning experiences for young children. It is not tied to any particular area of the curriculum, but instead is a way of thinking, knowing and making choices and can be demonstrated in any aspect of learning.
This can be encouraged by providing

- open ended resources
- a rich variety of experiences
- space to explore materials
- time to develop ideas
- freedom to solve problems and try things out
- the opportunity to learn skills
- adults as role models
Enabling environments

(photographs)
Consider if ......

- the curriculum content is meaningful and relevant
- planning remains flexible allowing children’s interests and needs to be met
- learning environments reflect the children (and their needs) within them
- parents/carers are supported and informed about the transition policy
Non negotiable for transitions are:

• that information is passed on (including learning journals) and used to inform practice
• where possible, practitioners visit children in the Nursery (or Pre School) or Reception class (Summer term)
• home visits for Nursery and Reception children
• support is provided for vulnerable children
• that Year 1 teachers understand child development and continue effective EYFS
• that Year 1 teachers understand the EYFS Profile and use the data to inform their provision and practice
Transitions from EYFS to primary school can be difficult for some children.... You will also want to consider whether some aspects of the EYFS should be extended into the primary curriculum including social and emotional areas of development and widening the opportunities for child initiated and play based activity.

(chapter 4, Transitions)
English:

• During Year 1 teachers should build on work from the Foundation Stage,

• Pupils entering Year 1 who have not yet met the early learning goals for literacy should continue to follow the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop their word reading, spelling and language skills.
EYFS Profile Data

• What information is passed onto you? What format does it take?
• What does it tell you?
• What does it not tell you?

• How do you use it?
Data Analysis

• identify significant data
• Identify high and low data
• Identify vulnerable groups of children
• Identify trends
• consider the implications for you (and the EYFS)
• identify next steps for practice
Children’s early learning experiences are key to their attainment in later. During this time, children develop rapidly – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Good quality early education offers children the opportunity to reach their full potential and provides a solid framework for later learning.

(Hodge, 2000, cited in De Boo, 2004 p.9)
Children need

- continuity as well as progression (focus on making a gradual transition rather than making it too different too quickly)
- an environment and ethos that promotes independence, thinking and responsibility
- the curriculum embedded in practical/real experiences and play contexts
- opportunities to be in control of and make links within their own learning (at least some of the time)
- a continued focus of speaking and listening
- time to repeat, practice and consolidate their learning
- to be seen as individuals (at least some of the time)
- to enjoy and be inspired by school
• Any questions?
• Any changes planned for your own practice?
• Would the audit be useful?
Remember

children who have had one negative experience of transition will carry the memory of this to the next transitions they have to make