

Abacus Nursery - Transitions

Transitions are changes that take place in our life; changes that move us from one stage to another. Transitions are an essential part of growing up and the most important ones happen during our early years. In light of this we recognise that a number of these transitions will take place during their time at Abacus; some planned and some unplanned. Staff are trained to be aware of any changes in the behaviour and personality of a child and sensitive to the impact of such changes. This policy sets out the ways in which we support children going through these transitions.

Some of the more universal transitions that all babies and young children experience are:-

- Birth itself
- From milk to solids
- From crawling to walking
- From being fed to feeding ourselves
- From nappies to being toilet trained
- Becoming self-aware
- Able to be cared for by others
- Going to Nursery/Going to School
- Developing new skills

Other transitions children in our care may experience are:-

- A new baby
- Moving downstairs
- Violence/abuse
- Parents divorcing/step parent/new partner
- A serious illness/accident/death in the family
- Moving house

Transition involves the experience of:

- New, bigger, places and spaces
- New, bigger, people (and more of them)
- New, unfamiliar, rules about what is expected and permitted
- New words or even languages
- New types of task ('choosing' or 'work')
- New responsibilities as a member of a group, class or School

Changes in identity can be effected during transition:

- Early identities are formed through seeing ourselves reflected in the eyes of others
- Moving to a new room/setting brings with it new 'others' - peers and adults with whom to form relationships
- Identities undergo transformations i.e. From 'child in the family' to 'child in a small group (upstairs)' or 'child in larger group (downstairs)' to 'pupil in reception' , From 'big' to small; from expert to novice

As part of our partnership with parents we encourage them to inform us of any changes in the home environment that may impact on their child. This information allows staff to be aware/understanding of the reasons behind any potential changes in the child's behaviour.

Children's social, emotional and educational needs are central to any transition between one setting and another or within a setting and research shows friends and friendships are the most important support for children in transition. Each transition provides the child with experience to assess and deal with the next transition. When we are very young the brain is particularly active in making new pathways and strengthening already existing ones. When an experience is repeated and repeated it becomes hardwired and is consequently more difficult to remove or change. Children who have been badly treated are often hardwired for fear, anxiety or, more sadly, are subdued and defensive.

We work with our parents, involving them at every stage and valuing what they have to say. We keep them informed in advance about what will happen at transitional times that occur in the Nursery environment i.e. settling in and moving from the baby room to downstairs. This 'parent partnership' can then offer help with the unexpected transitions, such as divorce or moving house. Parents are confident to share their concerns, knowing that we will do all that we can to support their child's needs at Nursery. The use of books, role play and the persona doll for example allow staff to share the 'worries' transition and help the child to explore his/her feelings in a calm and caring manner.

At Abacus we understand it is these early transitions, and how children cope with them, that will have the greatest effect on the rest of their emotional development, and their ability to cope with life's challenges. Some children and their parents will find transition times stressful and require extra support through discussion/extra sessions, while others will enjoy the experience. Because staff understand the stages of development and the transitions children experience whilst they are at Nursery, they understand the importance of providing a warm and secure environment, where they work as a team' helping children to gain the skills they will need as they go through each transitional stage:-

Enhancing children's strengths, competences and resilience by an early focus on social and emotional rather than academic knowledge by;

- Giving children control of their learning through play rather than instruction.
- Opportunities to explore activities (alone or with others)
- Encouragement to experiment and take risks
- Challenges to solve problems through trial and error, through reflection and reasoning, and through consultation with others
- Support in assessing resources
- Informative feedback rather than praise.

Starting at Abacus Nursery

A Key person is assigned to each child when starting. Time is allocated for the key person and parent(s) to share information about their child, a proforma is in place to support this dialogue. A 'daily routine' questionnaire completed by parents ensures we are able to have a continuity of home experiences in the nursery by duplicating where possible, routines in place at home re: sleeping, use of comforters and mealtimes etc. Links between home, preschool, Nursery and School provide continuity and security as children acquire new

identities but retain their existing identity. The role of the key person continues throughout that child's time at nursery as they carry out observations, complete written and verbal reports for parents and form a link between the old and new room/setting. This continual sharing of information helps the development of a strong relationship between parent and carer, key for the success of every child and future transitions.

Transition downstairs

At Abacus Nursery our upstairs floor catered for babies from three months to children aged two. The September after the child's second birthday, children move downstairs. Where a child becomes two, early in the academic year, consultation between staff and parents take place, regarding the suitability of them moving down early (just before they are two) or at a later time mid-year. When a child is due to move downstairs due to age or stage readiness, we will work with parents to ensure this is a seamless process in which the child is fully supported at all stages

To make this transition a positive experience, from April onwards children upstairs are invited down for short sessions to play, have tea etc. The child's key worker will go with the child on these initial visits to enable a familiar person to be present at all times. Wherever possible two (or more) friends will be moved together to enable these friendships to be kept intact and support the children with the peers they know. This to start with is 'ad hoc' and is of course dependent on availability downstairs. As the term continues and children take leave, availability increases and these sessions can take place more often building up to regular sessions for each child due to move downstairs, taking place each week throughout the summer. In readiness for the first visit downstairs a transfer form is completed by the child's key person upstairs to inform staff downstairs of any important facts i.e. a dietary need and also a little about the child. A key person is allocated downstairs who is then responsible for noting in the communication book any important information all staff need to be aware of (further information could be discussed during the next staff meeting), updating nappy, sleep charts etc to accommodate the child during their time downstairs. Transfer bags are in place to transfer the child's peg line name, nappy's, cream, water bottle, inhaler etc and allergy place mat (where needed). Early day assessments are carried out recording how the child has been, what they have eaten etc. This information is shared with the parent upon collection.

Only when the child has settled in through these 'taster' sessions will the permanent room move take place. If a child requires more support, this will be discussed between the key person, parent, manager and room leader of the new room to enable this to occur. This may include moving their key person/upstairs member of staff down with them on a temporary basis.

Some of the procedures i.e. 'signing in' and the peg logo system is the same up and down, but due to the age of children catered for downstairs other procedures are different. Where ever possible routines, behavioural expectations etc are consistent throughout the Nursery. To ensure parents also experience a smooth transition as their child moves down a Transition evening is held each February. A letter explaining in detail these differences and what changes to expect is given at this meeting but can be shared for any child transitioning earlier.

Pre school guide

It is at this stage our 'Pre school guide' is given to each family. This guide provides parents with valuable information about:-

- The EYFS frame work
- How they can support their child during this stage of their development at home
- How they can support their child's learning/involvement at Nursery
- What we do at Nursery to support their child's learning
- How we help prepare their child with the skills needed for starting school

To School

At Abacus Nursery we pride ourselves in providing a 'home from home' environment where children quickly settle in, however, we are aware that before long the children who have become part of Abacus will be moving on to their next stage of education. For all children the transition from nursery to school can be an unsettling experience as they leave an environment that is comfortable and familiar to them and move to a new, larger setting with unfamiliar faces. Therefore Abacus Nursery aims to support children by making this transition as smooth and positive as possible.

In order to achieve this we:

1. Encourage children to talk and think about starting school, through:

- Reading stories and books about starting school
- Offering opportunities for the children to share their experiences of visits they have had to their school, encouraging the children to talk about: what they have seen, what they played with, other children they met, adults they have met etc (both in group and one-to-one situations)
- Using the Nursery's Persona doll to act out concerns the children might have and to encourage discussion about starting school
- Providing opportunities for the children to ask questions
- Role-play
- Having a list of which schools children will be attending so that we can talk to the children about who else will be moving to their school or which children have moved there in the past that they may remember

2. Support children to develop the skills they will be using at school:

Many of the skills children will require at school are already supported in the daily provision at Abacus. Planned learning opportunities reinforce and help them develop further.

Social Skills

- Sharing and turn taking
- Mixing with other children
- Having set boundaries and expectations
- Tidying up

Literacy skills

- Sharing books
- Nursery rhymes
- Name recognition
- Mark making and emergent writing

However, we recognise that as children approach their move to school it is important to check how children are progressing and, where appropriate, provide extra support with skills they will find useful at school.

We also provide children with support in developing skills they would not have experienced at Nursery such as through asking parents to bring their child's P.E kit to Nursery so that the children can experience and practice changing from their clothes into their P.E kit and back again.

3. Invite children's teachers to the nursery:

Children due to start school create a postcard drawing the front picture and writing their name. Staff add details of when the child attends and the child posts the invitation, inviting their new teacher to come and visit them at Nursery.

This visit provides an opportunity for teachers to observe the child/children who will be in their class, in an environment that the child is comfortable in. It is also an important opportunity for them to talk to that child's key worker gaining information about the child's ability, personality, interests and anything else that is noteworthy.

4. Sharing information:

Parents are asked to complete a short proforma providing details of the School their child is due to attend and permission for the sharing of information to take place. Where concerns are felt about a child's transition and wellbeing at School and permission has been given, Nursery will work in Partnership with School to ensure the child's needs are met. To ensure Schools are given enough time to put support in place, we will inform a School of any child in receipt of higher needs funding at Nursery, by April prior to the September start date. This is also the case for any child with medical problems due to start School. In this instance the Physical Medical Support Team PMST (with parent's permission/signed consent) will be made aware. Schools can then make sure they are prepared for specific actions required e.g. for a child who may bleed excessively when they fall over, a child with epilepsy or diabetes. We will also notify a school of EAL or travellers children so the School can gather the appropriate information and be prepared for a child starting

5. Complete transfer forms:

Using the Information saved on their Tapestry Journal. A further comment is also made giving a broader and more personalised view of the child i.e. their likes and dislikes. This is then shared with the child's parents by a member of staff explaining the contents of the form and answering any of their queries. The parent(s) is invited to add their own comment and asked to initial as proof of reading it. This form along with an example of the child's drawing is then sent to the appropriate school providing them with a picture of the child's stage of development, learning styles and personality.

6. Celebrate:

We celebrate the transition to school through a graduation day held at West Monkton Village Hall. The day provides an opportunity for children, parents and staff to say goodbye and to celebrate the children's achievements.

The children take part in a graduation ceremony, where the children leaving for school wear a hat (they have made) and a gown and go onto the stage to receive a certificate and an Abacus teddy bear. Parents and relatives are invited to watch the ceremony and receive their child's learning journal from Tapestry downloaded on to an Abacus memory stick.

When transitions work for children, the results are:-

- Resilience and resourcefulness
- Children will persist with difficulty, welcome challenge, solve problems and maintain their self-concept through subsequent transitions
- Ready willing and able to learn
- Children will feel confident in their own learning strategies and in the adults who teach them
- Disposition for lifelong learning
- Children will sustain their motivation through different phases of education
- Commitment to Society and Community
- Children see the value of working together for shared goals

Family breakdowns:-

When parents separate it is a difficult situation for all concerned. The nursery understands that emotions run high please refer to the separated families policy which shows how the nursery will act in the best interest of the child.

Moving home and new siblings:-

These are normally two events that parents will have advance notice of, and we ask that parents let the nursery know about these events so we can support the child to be ready for this. We will spend time talking to the child and providing activities that may help the child to act out any worries they have, e.g. through role play, Maisie the nursery puppet, stories and discussions.

Bereavement:-

The nursery has produced a separate policy on bereavement as we recognise this can be a very difficult time for children and their families. Nursery will offer support to all concerned should this be required.

If parents feel that their child requires additional support because of any changes in their life, we ask that you speak to the nursery manager and the key person to enable this support to be put into place.

Starting nursery

We recognise that starting nursery may be difficult for some children and their families. We have a settling in policy to support the child and their family.

Moving rooms procedure

When a child is ready to move to a different room in the nursery, we follow the process set out below and work with the parents to ensure this is a seamless process in which the child

is fully supported at all stages. This may include a handover meeting between the existing key person, new key person and parents.

- The child will spend short sessions in their new room prior to the permanent move to enable them to feel comfortable in their new surroundings
- The child's key person will go with the child on these initial visits to enable a familiar person to be present at all times
- Wherever possible groups of friends will be moved together to enable these friendships to be kept intact and support the children with the peers they know
- Parents will be kept informed of all visits and the outcomes of these sessions e.g. through photographs, discussions or diary entries
- Only when the child has settled in through these taster sessions will the permanent room move take place. If a child requires more support this will be discussed between the key person, parent, manager and room leader of the new room to agree how and when this will happen. This may include moving their key person with them on a temporary basis.

Starting school or moving childcare providers

Starting school is an important transition and some children may feel anxious or distressed. We will do all we can to facilitate a smooth move and minimise any potential stresses. This following process relates to children going to school. However wherever possible, we will adapt this process to support children moving to another childcare provider e.g. childminder or another nursery.

- We provide a variety of resources that relate to the school, e.g. uniform to dress up in, a role play area set up as a school classroom, photographs of all the schools the children may attend. This will help the children to become familiar with this new concept and will aid the transition
- We invite school representatives into the nursery to introduce them to the children
- Where possible we use other ways to support the transition to school, e.g. inviting previous children from the nursery who have moved on to school to come back and talk to the children about their school experiences
- Where possible we plan visits to the school with the key person. Each key person will talk about the school with their key children who are due to move to school and discuss what they think may be different and what may be the same. They will talk through any concerns the child may have and initiate activities or group discussions relating to any issues to help children overcome these
- We produce a comprehensive report on every child starting school to enable teachers to have a good understanding of every child received. This will include their interests, strengths and level of understanding and development in key areas. This will support continuity of care and early learning.

Other early years providers

Where children are attending other early years settings or are cared for by a childminder we will work with them to share relevant information about children's development. Where a child is brought to nursery or collected from nursery by a childminder we will ensure that key information is being provided to the child's parent by providing the information directly to the parent via email or telephone.

Family breakdowns

We recognise that when parents separate it can be a difficult situation for all concerned. We have a separated families policy that shows how the nursery will act in the best interest of the child.

Moving home and new siblings

We recognise that both these events may have an impact on a child. Normally, parents will have advance notice of these changes and we ask parents to let us know about these events so we can support the child to be prepared. The key person will spend time talking to the child and providing activities that may help the child to act out any worries they have, e.g. through role play, stories and discussions.

Bereavement

We recognise that this may be a very difficult time for children and their families and have a separate policy on bereavement which we follow to help us offer support to all concerned should this be required.

If parents feel that their child requires additional support because of any changes in their life, we ask that you speak to the nursery manager and the key person to enable this support to be put into place.