

# Involving Parents and Carers

## Involving Parents/Carers

Change is a part of life, which can be both exciting and daunting.

Children often need our support in preparing for new things such as a change of early years setting, Key Person or the move to school.

There are lots of things that you can do to help prepare children for all types of transitions.

Early Years providers have a big part to play in empowering parents/carers to effectively support their child emotionally and practically during periods of transition.

“There is no substitute for speaking with parents face-to-face and getting to know them.

Admissions forms can capture only part of the picture...”

*Nutbrown and Page (2008)*

Parents are the experts on their child. Make use of their knowledge when planning transitions.

## The 'Triangle' of trust and attachments'

"Creating relationships with parents by tuning into their needs, recognising their unique enthusiasms and motivations, their skills and strengths as well as their anxieties and concerns is fundamental to the success of transition."

*Elfer et al. (2019:90)*

Be aware of parents past experiences of childcare and education, which may not always be positive. Think carefully about how you welcome new parents, as well as children, into your setting.

Child

"An understanding of attachment theory helps us relate to the ways that individual parents themselves might respond to the stress of their child's transitions"  
*(O'Connor, 2018)*

Provider

Parent/Carer

All families are vulnerable during times of transition – although some may be more vulnerable because of their unique circumstances and experiences.



### Go on this journey together

Make finding out about your child's new setting a journey of discovery for you both.

Look at websites, Facebook pages and prospectuses'.

Many settings now offer virtual tours and post videos of their staff on their websites, helping children to visualise these new important people in their lives.



Plan to take regular walks to your child's new provision.

Talk about where your child's new room or classroom might be and where the garden or playground is.

Talk about the things you see on your journey; "left at the post box and up past the shop".



### Learning new skills

Help your child to learn new skills to prepare them for change.

Think about practising balancing a dinner tray with drinks and meals – make it into a game.

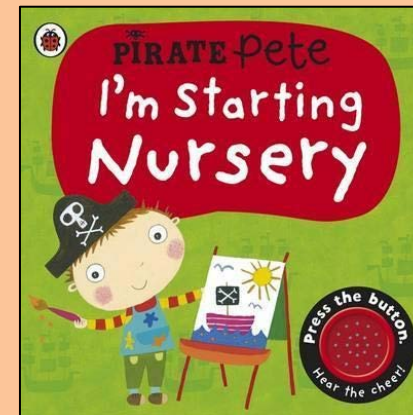
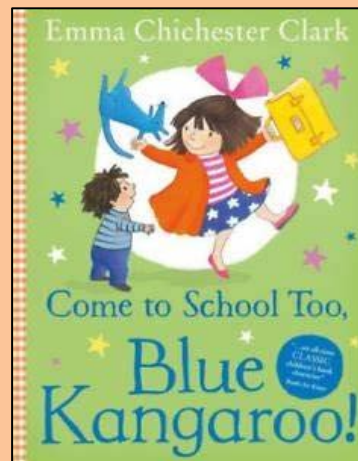
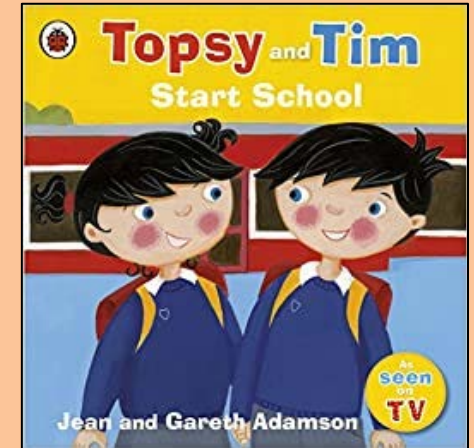
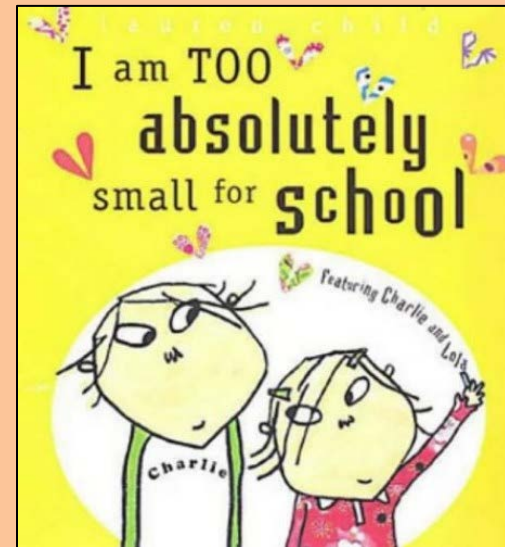
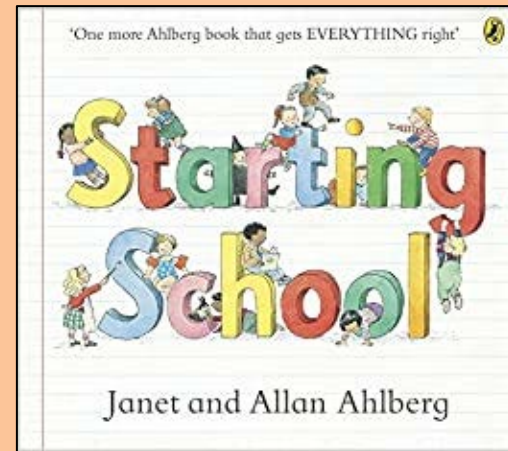
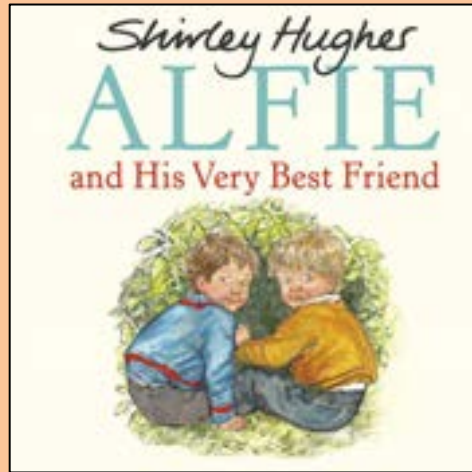
Other 'games' you could play are racing to change in and out of their different clothes or having a go at opening lunchboxes and food packets.  
Keep it fun!

Don't forget to remind parents to apply for a school place before the spring term of the year their child will go into Reception. Parents should also apply for school place alongside any application for a specialist provision placement.

[Apply for a primary school place 2022/2023 | Suffolk County Council](#)

## Sharing books

Read books about starting nursery or school with your child. Stories are a great way of introducing new things to children.



### Talk about your own experiences

Share your own happy and exciting memories of being at pre-school or school. Share photographs of you and other family members in their school uniforms.

If you have older children remind them to talk positively about settings and schools when in front of their younger sibling.

[Getting ready for primary school | Oxford Owl](#)

### Be prepared

Start practicing the morning routine - for you and your child.

Consider introducing a visual timetable which includes pictures, symbols, or photos of key morning tasks; brushing teeth, getting dressed, eating breakfast, and walking to school.

Visit for some further ideas

<https://connectability.ca/visuals-engine/>

### Becoming familiar

If you already know other children who will be starting the setting or class at the same time as your child, why not arrange a Facetime or WhatsApp chat with them?

This may help your child to become familiar with the concept that they will be starting with their peers, some of whom they may already know.

### Talking about feelings

Be open and curious about how your child is feeling.

*How do you feel about going to Nursery/School?*

*What are you most looking forward to?*

*What do you think pre-school/school will be like?*

[How to talk to your child about emotions - CBeebies - BBC](#)

### Building Independence

Pre-school and school readiness is not all about your child's reading, writing and numeracy skills. Support your child to practise independence skills such as putting their shoes on, using the toilet, and washing their hands, using a tissue, getting dressed and undressed. Do not worry if your child can not complete all these tasks independently, some children may need lots of time to learn these skills.

[Being school-ready | PACEY](#)

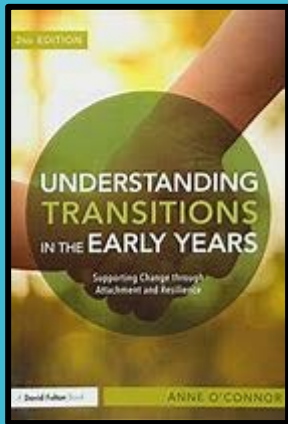


## Pause for Reflection

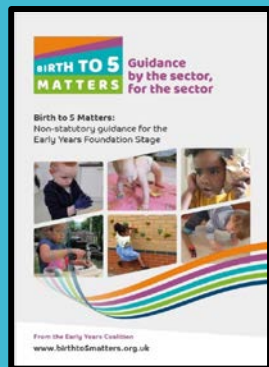
Click on the resources below for further information



2.2  
Parents as Partners



"Understanding Transitions in the Early Years" by Anne O'Connor



Pages 28-31

**Do you plan and organise opportunities for children and families to visit your setting at convenient and accessible times?**

**Do you foster an approach to transition and settling in where children lead the process and parents/carers can stay with their child if wanted?**

**Do you recognise that parents/carers are key to the success of their child's transition and settling in?**

**Do you plan to meet with parents/carers to discuss any anxieties or worries that they may have prior to their child's transition?**

**Do you provide parents/carers with 'Welcome Packs' which include information about your setting's transition processes?**

**Do you ask parents/carers for photographs and information of things and people that are important to the child?**