

09 Early years practice procedures

2-year checks and school transitions

Establishing children's starting points

When children start at Castor and Ailsworth Preschool, they arrive at different levels of learning and development. To help them to settle and make rapid progress it is important that they are provided with care and learning opportunities that are suited to their needs, interests and abilities. This means establishing and understanding their starting points and whether there are any obstacles to their learning, so that teaching can be tailored to the 'unique child'.

- The aim of establishing a child's starting points is to ensure that the most appropriate care and learning is provided from the outset.
- Starting points are established by gathering information from the first contact with the child's parents/carers at induction and during the 'settling in' period. Staff do not 'wait and see' how the child is settling before they begin to gather information.

The information gathered is recorded within 4 weeks of the child's official start date and sooner where possible.

- The key person must make a 'best fit' judgment about the age band the child is working in, referring to Development Matters or Birth to Five Matters.
- The key person should complete details by indicating where they have gathered their evidence from, using more than one source where possible i.e. parent/carer comment and observation during settling in.

If the initial assessment raises any concerns that extra support may be required, then the SENDCo becomes informed.

- The key person is central to the progress check and must be the person completing it.
- Settings should take guidance from their local authority as to when the progress check at age two is completed; if no such guidance is provided, the progress check is completed when the child is between 26 and 30 months old. The child should be attending the setting for at least 1 term before the check is completed.
- Once the timing of the child's progress check is confirmed, parents/carers are invited to discuss their child's progress at a mutually convenient time.

- The setting must seek to engage both parents/carers and make allowance for parents/carers who do not live with their child to be involved.

Completing the progress check at age two

- On-going observational assessment informs the progress check and must be referred to.
- Children's contributions are included in the report. Staff must be 'tuned in' to the ways in which very young children, or those with speech or other developmental delay or disability communicate.
- Where any concerns about a child's learning and development are raised these are discussed with the parents/carers, the SENCo and the setting manager.
- If concerns arise about a child's welfare, they must be addressed through 06 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedures.
- The key person must be clear about the aims of the progress check as follows:
 - to review a child's development in the three prime areas of the EYFS
 - to ensure that parents have a clear picture of their child's development
 - to enable educators to understand the child's needs and, with support from educators, enhance development at home
 - note areas where a child is progressing well and identify any areas where progress is less than expected
 - describe actions the provider intends to take to address any developmental concerns (working with other professionals as appropriate)

Transition to school

Moving on to school is a major transition in a child's life involving separation from familiar adults and children. Older children have a more secure understanding of 'people permanence' and can approach new experiences with confidence. However, they need preparation if they are to approach transition to school with confidence and an awareness of what to expect.

Partnership with schools

- Details of the school that a child will be attending are recorded in the child's file along with the name of the reception class teacher.

- Every effort is made to forge and maintain strong links with all schools that children may attend. The setting manager will approach schools to open lines of communication where these have not previously existed.
- Teachers are welcomed into the setting and sufficient time is made for them to spend both with the child, their parents/carers and with the key person, to discuss and share information that will support the child's transition to school.
- Any action plans relating to a child's additional needs are also shared, where this is in place.
- Other formal documentation such as safeguarding information is prepared in line with procedure 07 Transfer of records.

Increasing familiarity for children

- There will be opportunities for children to become familiar with staff and school premises, for example visits to events such as May Day at the local school.
- Where possible, the key person will take the child to visit the new school
- If the setting is not within a reasonable distance of the school, other means of familiarisation will be explored. This could be through videos, photographs or other information about the school that can be shown within the setting. Staff may borrow resources from the schools and will use these with the children.

Preparing children for leaving

- Children and parents/carers form bonds with adults and children in the setting and will need preparation for separating from the relationships they have formed.
- Parents/carers should not be discouraged from bringing the child for the occasional brief visit, as separations often take time to complete. Sometimes children need the reassurance that their nursery/pre-school is still there and that they are remembered.