

# First Steps



Early years transition  
from home toolkit



# Welcome

## ‘First Steps’ – Early years transition from home toolkit.

The transition from home toolkit has been developed in order to build on existing good practice in Barnet and to ensure that all children starting at their first setting – be that a playgroup, nursery, day care setting or childminder have access to a transition based on best practice.

The aims of ‘First Steps’ are:

- to establish a coherent Barnet-wide transition procedure for all early years children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, moving from home to their first setting
- to provide children, parents and practitioners with tools and materials to support this procedure

The folder is divided into sections with guidelines on how to use the relevant materials and pro-forma at the beginning of each section. The pocket at the back of the folder contains the additional booklets and leaflets.

The CD-ROM contains all the pro-forma's so that you can personalise and copy them for your use as needed.

This toolkit is the result of an 18 month pilot project that has involved numerous Barnet early years settings, parents, children and local authority colleagues. I would like to thank everyone involved in what has been a successful and rewarding project. A list of the early years settings who took part in the pilot project and those others who have contributed to it can be found at the back of the toolkit. In particular, I would like to thank Carol DeRosa, Early Years Consultant and my colleagues in the Pre-school Inclusion Team for their help and support during the course of the project which I hope will have a positive impact on the transition experiences of early year's children, their parents and settings.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me Chris Dukes on **07956 224450**, or Hilary Solomon (Team Leader) on **020 8359 7612** or your Area SENCO.



# Introduction

“Transition should be seen as a process, not an event, and should be planned for and discussed with children and parents”

(The Practice Guidance for the EYFS Page 10 Para 1.30)

Starting at their first playgroup, pre-school, day care nursery or childminder can be exciting and nerve racking for both parents and children.

For many parents, it can be an anxious and emotional time. Many will have had no experience of education since they were at school themselves.

They may be unclear about what happens in an early years setting or what to expect in terms of the environment and curriculum. With such uncertainty themselves some parents will have little basis on which to help prepare their child for this first important transition.

For children it is often the first time they may have been away from their home environment and is the first step towards independence. Research points to the fact that, just like adults, children find transition and change stressful and that this stress can have a significant impact upon their emotional well being and academic achievements.

As practitioners we therefore have a huge responsibility to ensure that we get our approach to transition right and that it is.

“firmly rooted throughout our practice” so that we are “more likely to be raising emotionally intelligent children who make strong attachments, are resilient and resourceful when faced with change and are able to take risks and embrace new experiences”

(Anne O’ Connor, All About ...Transitions EYFS 2008)

The principle of well planned transitions and of working with parents to ensure that children’s needs are met appropriately is embedded within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Many of the materials in this toolkit are based on ideas and recommendations in the additional reading and materials found on the EYFS CD-Rom. These give further guidance on developing policies and procedures, as well as on developing the role of practitioners in helping children to make smooth and successful transitions.



### A transition audit

The EYFS materials identify key points for early years settings which help to ensure that children who are settling in to a new environment do well.

These are:

- transition is made a priority
- children are familiar with the people, places and routines
- they can make frequent visits to the setting
- children receive a home visit
- they have a key worker
- parents are involved and consulted
- parents are supported
- there is an informal and relaxed start to the nursery session
- children's friendships are acknowledged
- the setting is flexible
- there is a degree of predictability
- it is a safe place to take risks and make mistakes.

These points, together with what have been described as the most common worries that parents have when their child leaves their home environment for the first time, give a starting point for settings to reflect upon their own attitudes and practice regarding this transition.



### Common worries that may affect parents

- feeling upset or emotional about being separated from or 'leaving' their child, especially if their child becomes upset or distressed
- being unsure about what happens day-to-day in the setting and particularly what to do on their child's first day
- practical concerns about whether their child will be able to find the toilet or ask for something they need
- worries about whether their child will make friends, be alone, bullied or led astray
- anxiety about their child being safe or what will happen if they feel unwell, are upset or get hurt
- uncertainty about who to talk to if they have any concerns or feeling nervous about approaching staff, not wanting to appear fussy.

The following audit is a useful tool for carrying out an initial assessment of how your setting manages the transition from home.

It can be used as a starting point for developing your practice in this area and as a way of monitoring your progress.



|  |     |       |         |
|--|-----|-------|---------|
| Name of pre-school:  |     | Date: |         |
| Transition audit   |     |       |         |
| Do you:  | Yes | No    | Plan to |
| Meet with your staff team to discuss and evaluate your transition and settling in policies and procedures?   |     |       |         |
| Evaluate your correspondence to parents? (Is the tone welcoming, is the information clear)   |     |       |         |
| Make provision for parents with English as an additional language or with poor literacy skills?  |     |       |         |
| Allocate sufficient time and resources for staff to prepare for all aspects of transition?   |     |       |         |
| Allow time for accessing, reading and sharing information about children?  |     |       |         |
| Plan a programme of formal visits and drop in sessions?  |     |       |         |
| Organise a new parents meeting to welcome parents and pass on key information?   |     |       |         |
| Invite parents to become involved and suggest ways to help their child?  |     |       |         |
| Provide a 'welcome pack' and as much information as possible about your setting to parents?  |     |       |         |
| Have a photograph album or book, with pictures of the setting, staff and activities which can be shared with the child and parents.                    |     |       |         |
| Ask older children to prepare materials and information that they think will be helpful to new children? (Using talking photograph albums for example) |     |       |         |
| Offer home visits or have a space in which a similar meeting can be held either in your setting or elsewhere e.g. local library?                       |     |       |         |
| Plan a timetable for home visits, including interpreters and key staff?  |     |       |         |
| Have home visit guidelines, procedures and checklists for staff?   |     |       |         |
| Have an admission and/or home visiting format that gives parents the opportunity to tell you everything they want you to know about their child?       |     |       |         |
| Use the information you gather to plan the learning environment? (for example, responding to schemas, providing particular resources)                  |     |       |         |

## First Steps

| Do you:  | Yes | No | Plan to |
|--|-----|----|---------|
| Use photographs and labels of children and their families (taken with parental permission) for labels and in welcoming displays?   |     |    |         |
| Offer staggered admissions/transitions?  |     |    |         |
| Offer flexible/staggered start times and individual settling programmes?   |     |    |         |
| Allow children time to stand and watch others until they are ready to join in?   |     |    |         |
| Have a space for parents to sit or wait while their child is settling?   |     |    |         |
| Allow children to keep their parent, carer or transitional object with them as long as they want?  |     |    |         |
| Access and read all incoming information on individual children?   |     |    |         |
| Highlight and brief all staff on those children who may be vulnerable and/or have special educational needs?   |     |    |         |
| Seek advice from support teams such as the pre-school inclusion team (Area SENCOs), pre-school teaching team, specialist teacher team, before a child with special educational needs starts at your setting? |     |    |         |
| Liaise with outside health/education/social service professionals who may be involved with particular children?  |     |    |         |
| Review how each child's is settling in on a daily basis with parents and key staff?  |     |    |         |
| Have a way of communicating with absent parents about their child's day such as diaries, photos, stickers or email?  |     |    |         |
| Respond sensitively to parent's anxieties and try to understand their reasons for being so?  |     |    |         |
| Remain supportive but firm with parents who put their own needs first (due to, for example, work commitments) ?  |     |    |         |
| Have a six week or planned review to see how the process is going/has been for parent, child and setting?  |     |    |         |
| Have a parallel procedure for children who start in the middle of terms or at other times?   |     |    |         |
| Completed by:  |     |    |         |

# Application/registration

## Initial application form

A simple one page application form providing basic information on which to offer places.

## Registration form/child personal record

Ideally to be used when a place has been offered and accepted.

This should provide comprehensive information which can form the basis of a child's personal record.

## Information sharing consent form

This is a useful standard form to have as it provides parental permission to share information with relevant professionals. This includes the One More Step transition into school documents. It is essential however that parents are fully informed and involved in decisions about what information is shared, when and for what purpose.

## Guidance notes

These provide information on Ethnicity Codes and also explain what is meant by 'Parental Responsibility'





## Initial application form

Date:

Year and term child is eligible to start: (i.e. term of child's third birthday)

|   |       |                |       |
|---|-------|----------------|-------|
| Child's name:   |       | Date of birth: |       |
| Address:  |       |                |       |
| Postcode:   |       |                |       |
| Borough of residence:   |       |                |       |
| <b>Name/s of parents/carers:</b>  |       |                |       |
| 1.  |       |                |       |
| <b>Tel:</b>   | Home: | Mobile:        | Work: |
| Email:  |       |                |       |
| Address: (if different from above)  |       |                |       |
| 2.  |       |                |       |
| <b>Tel:</b>   | Home: | Mobile:        | Work: |
| Email:  |       |                |       |
| Address: (if different from above)  |       |                |       |
| <b>Additional information</b>   |       |                |       |
| If you have any other information about your child that you would like us to be aware of please make a note here or come along and talk to us about it. |       |                |       |
| Signed:   |       |                |       |

## Registration/Child's personal record

|  |                 |   |                             |
|--|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Child's name:  |                 | Date of birth:  |                             |
| Name to be used at pre-school:   |                 | Gender: Male/Female                                   |                             |
| Languages spoken at home:  |                 |   |                             |
| Main language child  | 1) understands: | 2) speaks   |                             |
| Home address:  |                 | Postcode:   |                             |
|  |                 | Borough of residence:                                 |                             |
| Would you like to receive pre-school letters/ information by email?  |                 | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>                          | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Religion:  |                 | Ethnicity: <small>(Please see guidance notes)</small> |                             |
| Are there any cultural or religious observances that you would like us to be aware of when looking after your child?<br><small>(For example: dress, diet, religious holidays or festivals)</small> |                 |   |                             |
| <b>Name/s of parent/s or carer/s with whom the child lives:</b>  |                 |   |                             |
| 1.   |                 |   |                             |
| Tel:   | Mobile:         | Work:   | Email:                      |
| Does this parent have parental responsibility?<br><small>(Please see guidance notes)</small>   |                 | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>                          | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2.   |                 |   |                             |
| Tel:   | Mobile:         | Work:   | Email:                      |
| Does this parent have parental responsibility?<br><small>(Please see guidance notes)</small>   |                 | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>                          | No <input type="checkbox"/> |



|  |                          |                              |                             |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Name/s of Parent/s or Carer/s with whom the child does not live all the time:</b>   |                          |                              |                             |
| Address:   |                          | Postcode:                    |                             |
|  |                          |                              |                             |
| Tel:   | Mobile:                  | Work:                        |                             |
| <b>Does this parent have parental responsibility?</b><br>(Please see guidance notes)   |                          | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Emergency contact details (if different from above)  |                          |                              |                             |
| 1. Name:   |                          | Relationship to child:       |                             |
| Tel:   |                          | Mobile:                      |                             |
| 2. Name:   |                          | Relationship to child:       |                             |
| Tel:   |                          | Mobile:                      |                             |
| <b>People authorised to collect the child. (Must be over the age of 16):</b>   |                          |                              |                             |
| 1.   |                          | Relationship:                |                             |
| 2.   |                          | Relationship:                |                             |
| 3.   |                          | Relationship:                |                             |
| <p>We welcome all children irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability. The following information will help ensure that your child has a smooth transition into our setting.</p> <p>It will also help us to plan for and support your child during their time with us.</p> |                          |                              |                             |
| <b>For Office use:</b>   |                          |                              |                             |
| Birth certificate (seen)   | <input type="checkbox"/> |                              |                             |
| Parental responsibility verified   | <input type="checkbox"/> |                              |                             |
| Other (specify)  | <input type="checkbox"/> |                              |                             |



## Health information

|  |            |         |         |
|--|------------|---------|---------|
| Name of child's doctor:  |            |         |         |
| Surgery address:   |            | Tel:    |         |
|  |            |         |         |
| Name of Health Visitor: (if known)   |            | Tel:    |         |
|  |            |         |         |
| <b>Please answer the following questions and give details.</b>                                   |            |         |         |
| <b>Does your child:</b>  |            |         |         |
| Have any allergies?  |            |         |         |
|  |            |         |         |
| Have an epipen?  |            |         |         |
|  |            |         |         |
| Have any on-going health issues?<br>(For example: glue ear, grommets, eye patch, eczema, asthma) |            |         |         |
|  |            |         |         |
| Have a medical condition?  |            |         |         |
|  |            |         |         |
| Take any regular medication?   |            |         |         |
|  |            |         |         |
| Have or need a Health Care Plan?   |            |         |         |
|  |            |         |         |
| Has your child had any major illness, operation or a hospital stay?                              |            |         |         |
|  |            |         |         |
| Are you concerned about any aspect of your child's health?                                       |            |         |         |
|  |            |         |         |
| Does your child have any special dietary requirements?   |            |         |         |
|  |            |         |         |
| <b>Immunisations/vaccinations</b>  |            |         |         |
| Has your child had the following immunisations? (Please tick)                                    |            |         |         |
| Whooping cough   | Diphtheria | Tetanus | Polio   |
| Hib Meningitis   | Measles    | Mumps   | Rubella |
| <b>Please inform us of any changes to health or personal information</b>                         |            |         |         |



## Additional needs/information

| In which area/areas does your child have additional needs?<br>Please tick the following and add any notes you think may be helpful to us.  |  |                          |   |
|--|--|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | Speech (for example: articulation)   |                          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | Language (for example: using or understanding language)                            |                          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | Emotional and/or behavioural (for example: separating/playing with other children) |                          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | Hearing  |                          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | Vision   |                          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | Physical/movement (for example: running, climbing stairs, using hands)             |                          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | Other (Please specify)   |                          |   |
| When were these needs first identified and by whom?  |  |                          |   |
| Does your child have or use any specialist equipment or resources? For example: glasses, hearing aids, Makaton, signing...   |  |                          |   |
| Does your child have any of the following? (Please tick)   |  |                          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | Individual Plan/Individual Education Plan  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Statement of Educational Need               |
| <input type="checkbox"/>   | Application for a Statement of Educational Need                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | CAF form (Common Assessment Framework form) |
| <p>In order to best support all the children in our setting we have a designated SENCO (Special Needs Co-ordinator) who will routinely liaise with any professionals involved with your child.</p> <p>The SENCO is:</p> <p>We also have access to support and advice from our Area Special Needs Co-ordinator with whom we may discuss your child. You will <b>always</b> be informed beforehand of any contact or discussions held about your child.</p> <p>Please sign below to indicate that you understand/agree to the above.</p> |  |                          |   |
| Signed:  |  | Date:                    |   |

## Contact details

Please tick all professionals involved with your child.

|                          |                          | Add their name, address and telephone number |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Health Visitor           |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Social Worker            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Speech Therapist         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Paediatrician            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Physiotherapist          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Occupational Therapist   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Educational Psychologist |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CAMHS                    |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pre-school Teacher       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Specialist teacher       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Area SENCO               |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other                    |  |

Any other comments/information

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Information sharing consent form

This form gives permission for .....  
to share relevant discussions, assessments, records, reports (which may include photographs)  
and information with other appropriate professionals (for example: speech and language  
therapist, physiotherapist etc.) working with your child, in order to provide support and aid  
transition into a pre-school setting or childminder.

***This will always be carried out in discussion with you.***

I/We (parent/carers name) .....

Give consent for ( Name of professional or setting) .....  
to share relevant information about my/our child

Name of child .....

Date of birth ..... with appropriate professionals  
working with him/her

Parent/carer's signature .....

Relationship to child .....

Date .....

Signed .....

Parent/carer's signature .....

Relationship to child .....

Date .....

Signed .....

This consent form is valid until your child enters primary school.  
You have the right to withdraw your consent to share information at any time.

Consent withdrawn ☐ Signed ..... Date .....

Name ..... Relationship to child .....



# Guidance notes

## Ethnicity

The table below is used to describe ethnicity. Please complete the application form choosing the appropriate category.

## Parental responsibility

From September 2008 it is a legal requirement for all pre-school settings to have information about who has legal contact with the child and who has parental responsibility. (Early Years Foundation Stage ; Statutory Framework p23)

### Who has parental responsibility?

- if a parents are married – both parents have parental responsibility
- if parents are unmarried
- if both parents register the birth and are named on the birth certificate then both parents have parental responsibility
- if only the mother registers the birth and is the only name on the birth certificate then she alone has parental responsibility

- adoptive parents have parental responsibility when the child is placed

### Who does not have parental responsibility?

- unmarried fathers who do not register the birth of the child jointly with the mother and who are not named on the birth certificate
- step Parents – unless parental responsibility is awarded by a section 8 Residence Order

## What this means for you and the pre-school setting

- consent forms can only be signed by those with parental responsibility
- children can be collected by parents who do not have parental responsibility as long as the pre-school have written consent from the parent who does have parental responsibility.

| Code | Ethnicity   |
|------|---|
| ABAN | Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                |
| AIND | Asian or Asian British – Indian                     |
| AOTH | Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background |
| APKN | Asian or Asian British – Pakistani                  |
| BAFR | Black or Black British – African                    |
| BCRB | Black or Black British – Caribbean                  |
| BOTH | Black or Black British – any other Black background |
| CHNE | Chinese   |
| MWAS | Mixed – White and Asian                             |

| Code | Ethnicity                          |
|------|------------------------------------|
| MWBA | Mixed – White and Black African    |
| MWBC | Mixed – White and Black Caribbean  |
| MOTH | Mixed – any other mixed background |
| WBRI | White – British                    |
| WIRI | White – Irish                      |
| WIRT | Traveller of Irish Heritage        |
| WOTH | White – any other background       |
| OOth | Any other ethnic group             |
| NOBT | Information not obtained           |
| REFU | Parent preferred not to say        |



# Children with SEN/disabilities

All documentation for children with Special Educational Needs or disabilities is the same as that for all other children.

It is hoped that the registration form and the 'Getting to know you booklet', along with parental discussions, will go most of the way to providing the necessary information about any additional needs.

The following pages of the application form will be particularly helpful

- a. additional needs/information
- b. contact details
- c. information sharing consent form.

However a transition for a child with Special Educational Needs or disability may need additional planning to ensure that it is smooth and successful from the beginning. To facilitate this, the pack includes an invitation to a meeting and a transition action plan.

## Invitation to a meeting

Good practice would expect that once in receipt of information about a child's additional needs, a pre-school setting would arrange a meeting to discuss the transition into the setting. Ideally this should take place in the term before the child is due to start to enable sufficient time for any plans or support to be put into place. Parents, any professionals involved and the Area SENCO would be invited.

## Transition action plan

The transition action plan is a tool by which any necessary training, resources or adaptations can be identified, planned for and put into place before a child starts. It clearly sets out what needs to be done, by whom and the time scale of any actions. A copy should be given to all those present at the meeting.



## Invitation to a transition meeting

To: ..... From: .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date: .....

Dear

We/I would like to invite you to a transition meeting for

..... Date of birth .....

To be held on ..... at .....

Venue: .....

He/she will be starting at our early years setting on/in .....

At this meeting, together with parents, we will be discussing .....  
needs as well as any actions needed to ensure a smooth transition into the setting,  
so as a professional involved with this child your input is of great value.

Please contact us to let us know whether or not you are able to attend or for an informal discussion

Many thanks

Yours sincerely

.....



# Transition action plan

Child's name ..... Date of birth .....

Name of professional/s involved .....

Pre-school setting/childminder .....

Start date: .....

| Action  | By whom and when   |
|---|--|
| (for example; photo books, extra visits, settling in plan, resources, access, training, staffing) | (for example; parent, setting, school, professionals, dates, timescales) |

## ‘Getting to know you’ booklet

Find out what the child enjoys doing, how they respond to change and challenge, what is likely to upset them and what strategies are beneficial when the child is distressed or challenging.

Really listen and engage with the parents and family members as they tell you about the child and share with you their hopes and fears for them.

Discussion about these things will ultimately be more helpful (and reassuring to the parent) than ticking off a list of assessment criteria, for example pencil control, number awareness and the child’s ability to use a knife and fork.

‘All About Transitions’ page 9 EYFS 2008

This booklet forms the basis of your information about a child’s strengths and needs, likes and dislikes etc before they arrive at your setting.

There are some ‘core’ pages as well as a range of additional pages to suit different circumstances. For example, for baby rooms or a child moving from home straight into a school reception class.

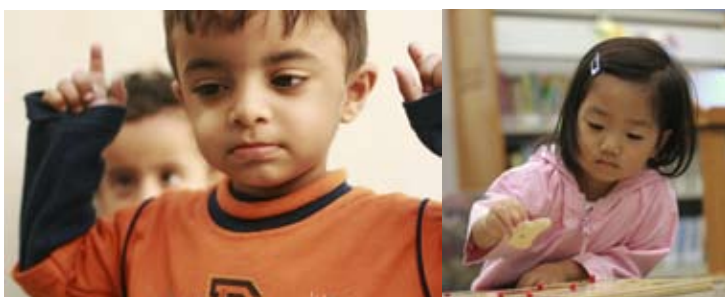
Whilst parents should have an opportunity to look through it at leisure some, if not all, is best completed with a parent either at the home visit or during a similar meeting with you at the setting or at an agreed meeting place.

- Sample letter to parents

This introduces the ‘Getting to know you’ booklet and invites parents to visit the nursery with their child.

- Guidance for parents

This helps parents to start completing the booklet by giving some advice on the sorts of things to include.



## First Steps

| Pre-school: |  | Parent/Carer: |  |
|-------------|--|---------------|--|
| Name        |  | Name          |  |
| Address     |  | Address       |  |
| Tel No.     |  | Date:         |  |
| Email       |  |               |  |

Dear

Your child ..... will soon be starting at our setting.

We would like to welcome you and ask you to start completing the enclosed 'Getting to know you' booklet.

This will give us valuable information to ensure that your child has a positive start at the pre-school.

Also as part of the process of getting to know you and your child, all families are offered a visit and tour of the pre-school.

We would like to suggest a visit on ..... at .....

If the above time is not convenient please contact us. This can be done by phone, email or by using the slip below.

We very much look forward to meeting both you and your child.

Yours truly,

.....



(Manager)

|   |  |      |  |
|---|--|------|--|
| Child's name  |  |      |  |
| Date and time of visit                                  |  |      |  |
| (Please delete)   |  |      |  |
| I/we are happy with the date and time of visit          |  |      |  |
| I/we would like to rearrange the date and time of visit |  |      |  |
| Signed  |  | Date |  |

### A parents guide to the 'Getting to know you' booklet

#### Dear Parent/s/Carers

As your child takes their first important step into pre-school it is important for us, and particularly your child's key person, to know a little about your child before they start.

The '**Getting to know you booklet**' is the first part of what will be an ongoing record of your child's progress and time at our pre-school setting. When your child leaves us to move on to school or another setting, a record is given to you to keep.

The following notes will give you some guidance on how to start to complete the booklet.

Don't worry if it is not finished by the time you meet with your child's key person as it can be filled in together at the meeting.

#### The title page

Here there is space for you to put a favourite photo of your child; if you don't have one then your child's key person can take a picture for you.

#### The special people page

Please write the names of family, friends, carers or even pets that are important to your child. If you can, add photographs. This will help us to identify the people who may bring or collect your child and can also be used to comfort your child while they are settling in.

#### The everyday things pages

The information on these pages helps us to settle your child, have things to talk about with them, and plan for their needs. Every child who starts at our setting is treated as an individual and will have different wants, needs and likes. There are no wrong answers!

#### A day in the life of... page

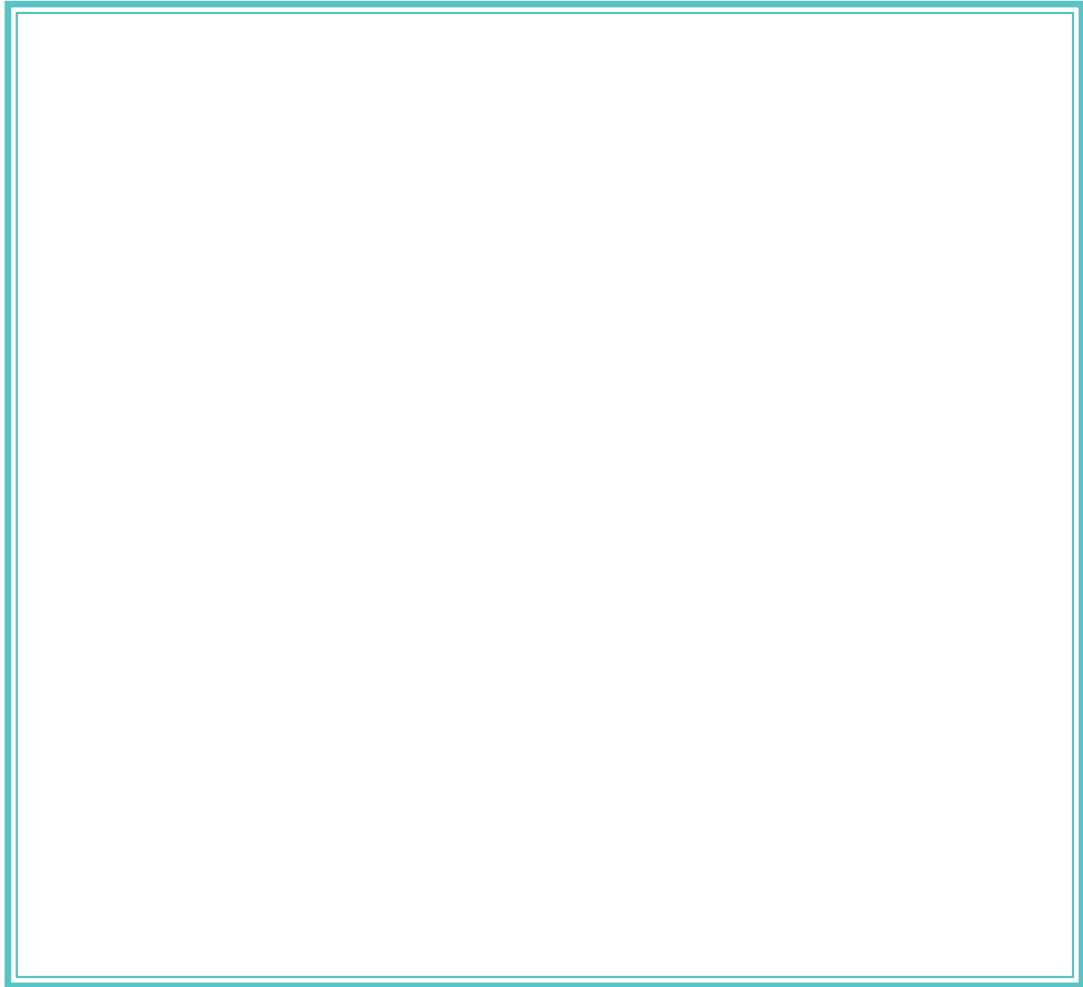
This page will give us an idea of your child's usual routine so that we can identify when they might feel tired or hungry or just need some quiet time. It is always helpful to know any regular activities such as swimming, dance classes or overnight stays with family or friends.

Please complete the forms before our meeting. If you have any queries regarding the booklet, please don't hesitate to contact the pre-school manager.

**Thank you.**



# Getting to know you



Name: .....

Birthday: .....



# Special people

(Please add photographs if possible)



I will usually be brought to pre-school by:

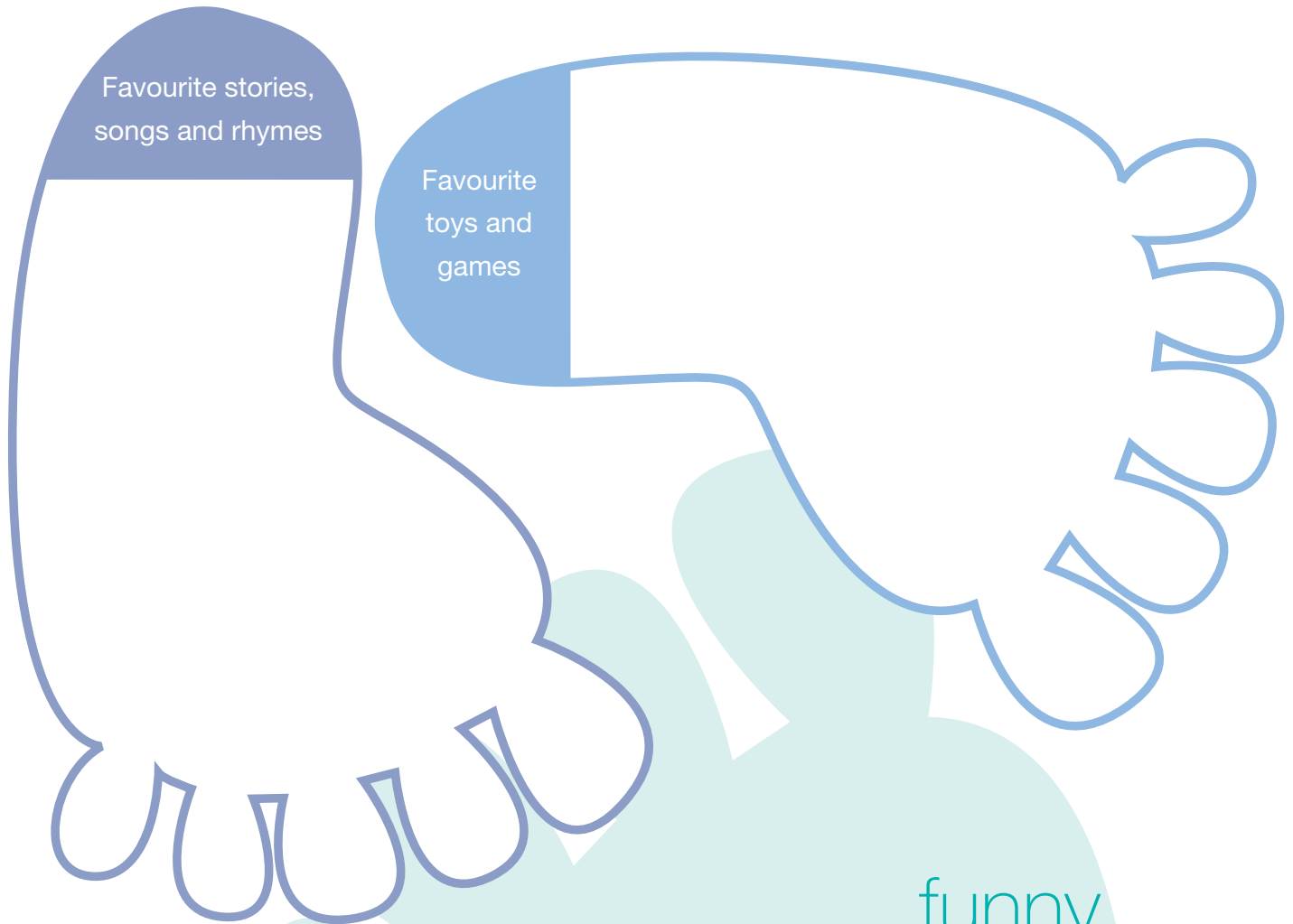
.....

I will usually be collected by:

.....



# Getting to know you



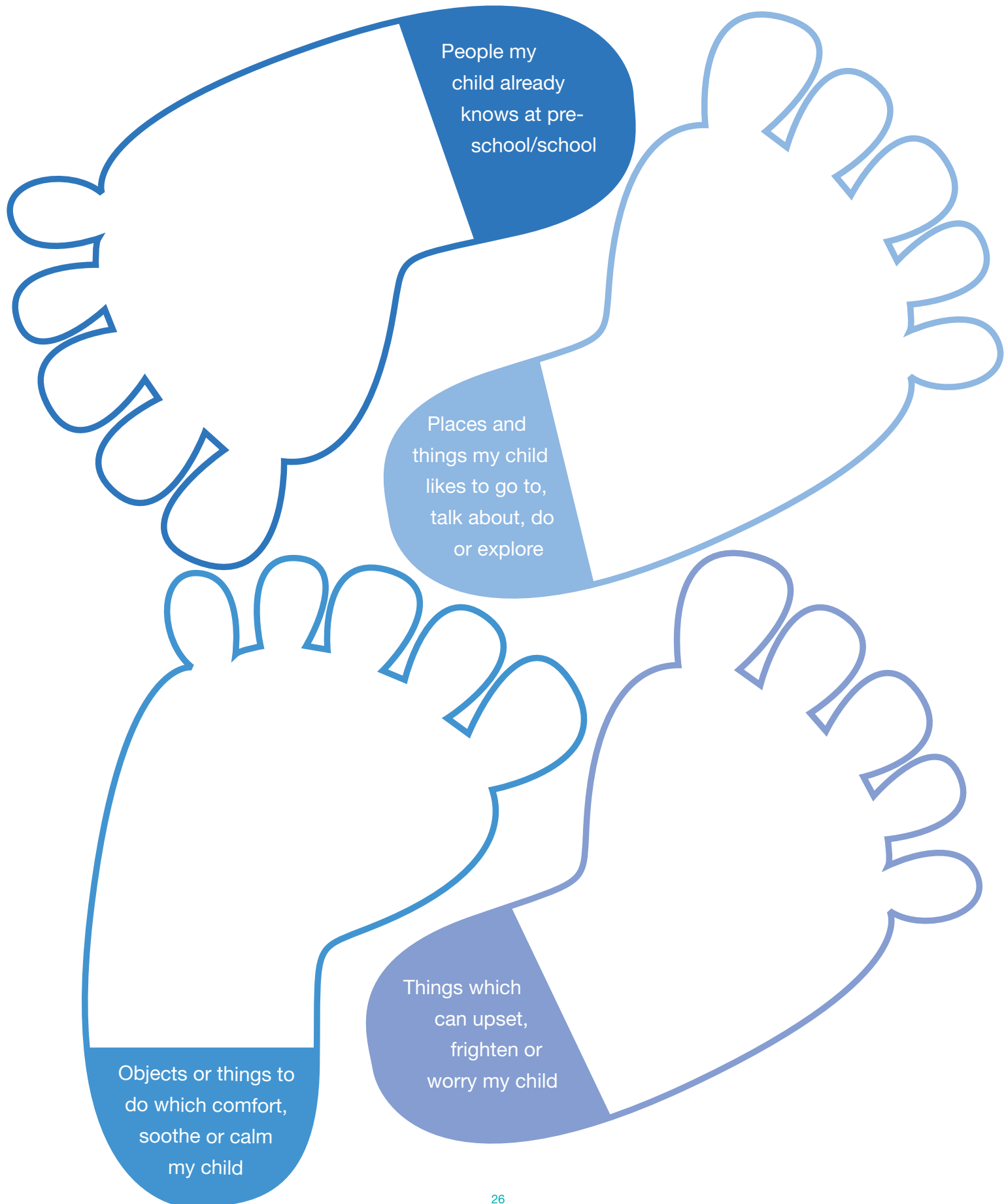
Favourite stories,  
songs and rhymes

Favourite  
toys and  
games

funny  
quiet  
likes routine  
strong willed  
**independent** **dreamy**  
adventurous lively  
talkative  
**curious** friendly  
**anxious** shy **sociable**  
sensitive **confident** *active*  
**kind**

Words to describe my child!  
(Please circle and add any others)

# Getting to know you



# Everyday things

How does your child  
separate from you?

What experience does  
your child have of playing  
with other children?

How does your child make  
their needs known?

What stage of toilet  
training is your child at?

How does your child  
tell you that they need  
the toilet?



# Everyday things

Tell us about your child's  
sleep pattern or routine




Snacks and drinks

Likes



Dislikes



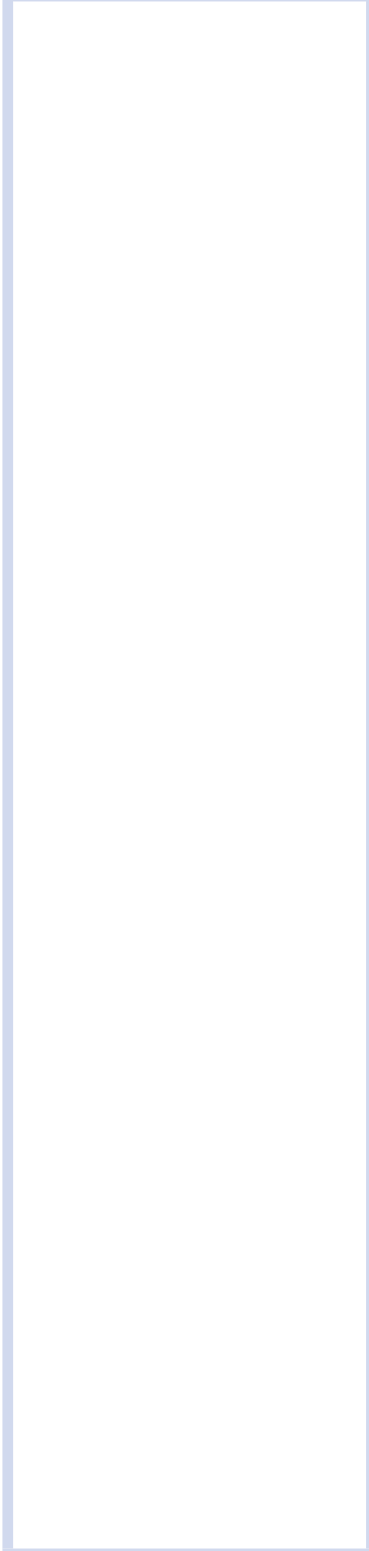
What kind of cup and cutlery  
does your child use?



What help will they need with  
feeding?



Is there anything else  
you would like us to  
know or are concerned  
about?



# A day in the life of...

| Child's name  |  |
|---------------|--|
| Approx. times | Typical routines for example mealtimes, sleep times, active or quiet times |
| Morning       |  |
| Afternoon     |  |
| Evening/night |  |



## Any regular activities in a week

For example, parent toddler group, Tumble Tots, swimming etc

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

# Baby talk

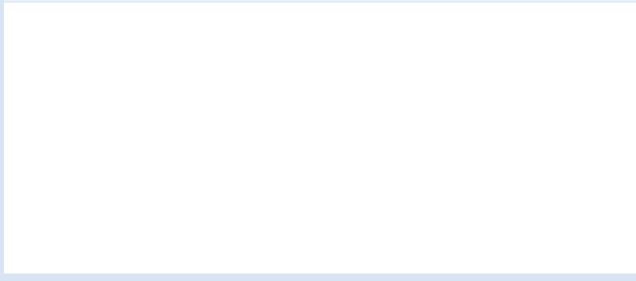


|   |  |   |        |
|---|--|---|--------|
| Child's name  |  | Date of birth   |        |
| Key person  |  | Date of information   |        |
| Date this plan will be looked at again  |  |   |        |
| <b>Milk and bottles</b>   |  |   |        |
| Type of milk  |  | How much  |        |
| Type of bottle and teat   |  | When  |        |
| <b>Weaning</b>  |  |   |        |
| Your child will be offered a range of foods.<br>Please list any food which you would prefer your child not to eat, along with any food allergies.   |  |   |        |
|   |  |   |        |
| <b>Feeding</b>  |  |   |        |
| Please tick what your child uses at mealtimes at home   |  |   |        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feeder cup <input type="checkbox"/> bowl/dish <input type="checkbox"/> spoon <input type="checkbox"/> plate <input type="checkbox"/> fork<br><input type="checkbox"/> open cup <input type="checkbox"/> one/two handle cup |  |   |        |
| <b>Teeth cleaning</b>   |  |   |        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tooth brush <input type="checkbox"/> tooth paste   |  |   |        |
| <b>Sleeping</b>   |  |   |        |
| Approx time   |  | For how long  |        |
| Sleeping position   |  | comforter: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |        |
|   |  | comforter type:   |        |
| Ways to soothe your child to sleep/additional information:  |  |   |        |
|   |  |   |        |
| <b>Personal care</b>  |  |   |        |
| Type of nappy:  |  | Wipes:  | Cream: |
| Any other information regarding your child's personal care routine:   |  |   |        |

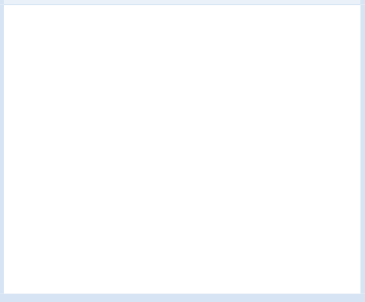
# Starting at school

Home to reception class

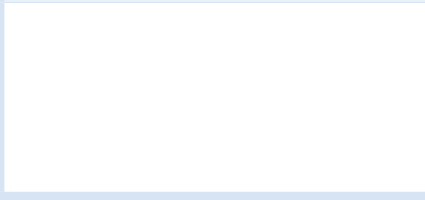
How does your child separate from you?



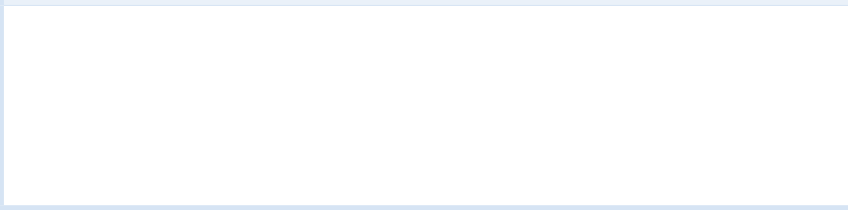
What experience does your child have of playing with other children?



Will your child spend time on things they enjoy?




Does your child join in any regular activities?  
For example, Parent and Toddler Group, swimming, music or dance classes



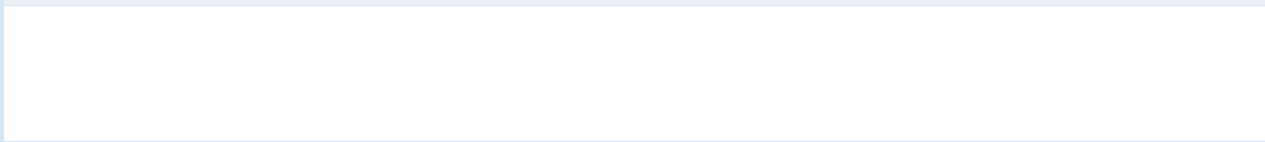
Has your child had experience of any of the following activities?

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> water play       | <input type="checkbox"/> sand play    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> painting         | <input type="checkbox"/> drawing      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> play dough       | <input type="checkbox"/> model making |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dressing up      | <input type="checkbox"/> computer     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sharing stories  | <input type="checkbox"/> puzzles      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> construction     | <input type="checkbox"/> games        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cutting/sticking | <input type="checkbox"/> singing      |

Please tell us about any significant events or experiences your child may have had.



Is there anything else you would like us to know or are concerned about?  
For example, Snack /Lunch times/ Play times /other needs



# Home visits

“Home visiting can be intrusive and expensive in both staff time and cover. It does need to be approached with sensitivity, but the rewards will definitely be worth the effort. It is a powerful opportunity to allow children (and families) to get to know new staff on their own territory”

(‘All About Transitions page 2 EYFS 2008)

## This section contains

- Practitioner guidance

Guidance on organisation and things to remember when planning a home visit.

- Checklist for practitioners

A quick checklist to use as a reminder during the visit.

- A sample letter to parents

This sample letter can be used to arrange a home visit.

- A Guidance Booklet for parents

This information can be sent out with the above letter. It explains the purpose of the home visit, what parents can expect to happen during the visit, and how to prepare for it.

It can be reproduced as a two page sheet but also comes in a booklet form at the back of the pack.





### Home visiting – practitioner's guidance

#### Basis of visit

- to stress the value and importance of working with parents for the benefit of the child
- to enable the setting, parents and child to plan and prepare for this important step.

Staff will visit in pairs (ideally)

- to allow one member of staff to spend time with the child whilst the other speaks with the parent/carer
- for reasons of personal safety.

#### Items to be taken on the visit

- pre-school information
- photo album
- spare forms
- home visit checklist
- mobile phone
- map
- camera
- pens /paper
- books/toys.



#### Personal issues

- familiarise yourself with the route/ location, parking restrictions etc before you leave
- leave details of your visiting schedule with another member of staff
- return to the pre-school or phone in when you have completed visits and are back at home.
- be aware of pets and other adults who may be in the home
- sit near a door or exit and if you feel uneasy or worried at any time, make an excuse and leave.

#### Other issues to be aware of

- staff should avoid commenting on a child's home or provision so that parents do not feel that any judgement is being made on their home or lifestyle
- staff should demonstrate an awareness and respect for differing cultures.
- they should comply with appropriate customs such as removing shoes, wearing modest clothing etc
- staff should remain aware of time constraints on both themselves and parents.

## Home visit checklist

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Date                    |  |
| Name of child           |  |
| Name of parent/carer    |  |
| Names of staff on visit |  |

| Discussed                            | Tick | Any comments |
|--------------------------------------|------|--------------|
| <b>The child</b>                     |      |              |
| Child's personal record/registration |      |              |
| Getting to know you booklet          |      |              |
| <b>The setting</b>                   |      |              |
| Setting information/photo booklet    |      |              |
| Routines                             |      |              |
| Essential items                      |      |              |
| Behaviour policy                     |      |              |
| Other policies                       |      |              |
| Confidentiality                      |      |              |
| Other                                |      |              |
| <b>Permission slips</b>              |      |              |
| Information sharing                  |      |              |
| Trips and outings                    |      |              |
| Photos and video                     |      |              |
| Computer use                         |      |              |
| Medicines                            |      |              |
| Other                                |      |              |
| <b>Settling in procedure</b>         |      |              |
| Arrivals and departures              |      |              |
| Settling in routine/schedule         |      |              |
| Settling in diary                    |      |              |
| Visit and start date schedule        |      |              |
| Other                                |      |              |

|                     |  |              |  |
|---------------------|--|--------------|--|
| Signed parent/carer |  | Practitioner |  |
|---------------------|--|--------------|--|

## First Steps

|                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Name and address of pre-school: | Name and address of parent/carer: |
| <br><br><br><br>                | <br><br><br><br>                  |
| Date:                           |                                   |

Dear

Your child ..... will be starting at our setting on .....

As part of the process of getting to know you and your child, all families are offered a home visit. This gives us an opportunity to exchange information and to complete the 'Getting to know you' booklet.

We would like to suggest a visit on ..... at .....

Our two members of staff will carry photo identification and will be with you for about 45 minutes.

Enclosed is a copy of our Home Visit Booklet which contains further details about home visiting.

If the above time is not convenient, or if you prefer to have a meeting at the pre-school, please contact us. This can be done by phone, email or by using the slip below.

We very much look forward to meeting both you and your child.

Yours truly,



(Manager)



|   |  |      |  |
|---|--|------|--|
| Child's name  |  |      |  |
| Date and time of visit  |  |      |  |
| (Please delete)<br><br>I/we are happy with the date and time of visit<br><br>I/we would like to rearrange the date and time of visit<br><br>I/we would prefer to meet at the pre-school |  |      |  |
| Signed  |  | Date |  |

# A guide for parents

## Home visits – Your questions answered

### What is a home visit?

As the name suggests a home visit is an informal visit to your home by pre-school staff.

It is usually carried out when your child has been offered a place at the setting but before they actually start.

### Why do home visits?

Home visits are a really good way for staff to begin to get to know both you and your child and vice versa.

It is a great opportunity to spend some time in a relaxed atmosphere, exchanging information and planning your child's start at the setting. You will also have the chance to ask questions and express any concerns you may have.

It is not an inspection of you or your home!

You are under no obligation to accept a home visit and a meeting can be arranged at the setting if you prefer.

All information is considered confidential and will not be shared without your permission.

## Practicalities

### Who will do the home visit?

This is often but not always the manager and another member of staff. It can also be the member of staff allocated as your child's key person.

### How long will it take?

The length of the visit can vary; it is usually between 30 – 45 minutes but no longer than an hour.

### What will happen at the home visit?

We know that children like to be busy and active!

One member of staff will usually get to know your child by playing with them and showing them books or photos of the setting. Your child may also like to share some of their favourite toys or activities with the practitioner.

The other member of staff will complete some basic information forms with you, give you a welcome pack and go through some details about the setting.

You will also have the opportunity to pass on the 'Getting to know you' booklet and anything else you would like the setting to know about your child. Any questions or concerns can be answered and discussed.



### How should I prepare for a home visit?

- Have some basic information to hand such as your doctor's name and address, your emergency contact details etc in order to speed up the form filling process.
- Try to remove any distractions, for example family pets. It is also helpful if the television has been turned off.
- Have some of your child's favourite toys or playthings available, as these can help the practitioner to engage with your child.
- Prepare a list of questions you may want to ask just so you don't forget!

If you have any questions, worries or concerns about your home visit or would like any further information please contact us at the setting.

Name of setting: .....

Contact name: .....

Telephone: .....

Email: .....



# Settling in

The approach to admissions and settling needs to be flexible if it is to address the individual needs of children and families.

A 'one-size-fits-all' approach to settling is never going to be the best way.

Adapt the routines and organisation of the setting so that you can provide a 'settling' policy that really does meet the needs of children, rather than expecting them to 'fit in' with existing timetables and procedures.

'All About Transitions' Page 3 EYFS 2008

## This section contains:

- Your child's first day – a guide for parents (example)

Whilst each setting will be different, this does provide a template for a creating your own short guidance sheet. This can help to allay parent's worries by explaining about what to expect on their child's first day at pre-school.

- Settling in diary

This diary can be used to record the length of stay, what the child enjoyed doing, any distress the child experienced and how they were comforted. It can be completed every day for 10 days whilst the child settles in and can be extended if necessary. It conveys the idea that settling in is an ongoing process which is monitored and adjusted to suit individual children's needs. It also provides a way of ensuring communication between setting and parent, particularly when an adult other than the parent collects the child.

It can be reproduced as a two page sheet but also comes in a booklet form at the back of the pack.

- A booklist

A booklist containing books about starting or being at playgroup for parents and practitioners to share with children.



### Ideas for working with parents to help their child settle in

- make sure that you have a clear settling in policy and that parents understand what it means in practice
- create a 'your child's first day' leaflet for your setting so that parents know what to expect
- have a simple method of communication like the settling in diary to keep parents informed and reassured about their child's day
- ask parents to provide a tape with a reassuring message or familiar song which their child can listen to if they are missing their parents. this is especially helpful for children whose first language is not spoken by anyone else at the nursery
- begin to build up relationships between parents and their child's key person during home visits or visits to the nursery so that there is a clear point of contact if parents have concerns
- talk to parents about their child's emotional wellbeing and how you are dealing with any upset or distress
- encourage children to share/show things from home like favourite books as well as sending home messages or drawings by the children
- send home photographs or a talking photo album that children can share their day with their parents
- use notice boards and information booklets to ensure that parents know who everybody is and what goes on in the nursery
- encourage parents to talk to each other as they will have questions and concerns in common and can support each other.



# Your child's first day

## How long should you stay?

Please try to stay for the amount of time agreed upon at the meeting with your child's key person.

If your child needs extra settling time your key person will help you with this.

## What should you bring?

A piece of fruit

A set of spare clothes (with your child's name in)

A comforter or toy

The book which was shared on the home visit

## What should you do when you first arrive?

- when coming into pre-school, help your child to find his/her name and put it on the name board
- help your child put the fruit in the fruit bowl
- help your child identify their named coat peg and hang up his/her coat/bag
- find your child's key worker who will introduce your child to the activities on offer
- if your child wants you to play, then join in at first, talk to the other children with your child
- once your child is settled at an activity, try to move away, but keep within sight
- gradually move out of sight of your child
- once your child seems happy to play without you present, (for more than five minutes) inform your child you are going to

go out of the room for a minute but will be back

- if your child accepts, leave the room and wait in the foyer, your child's key worker will support your child and where necessary, call you back
- if your child does not accept, wait a little while longer.

**This process may take longer than one session, but will work in the end!**

## What should you expect?

Your child may not want to take part in any activities, particularly story time, circle time, singing or tidy up time.

Please do not worry; it takes time for children to be comfortable to do these things with unfamiliar people.

Some children settle quite quickly for the first two weeks but then seem to need more reassurance and you may need to begin the settling process again.

## Most importantly, don't worry!

The pre-school staff have experienced the settling in process with many children and have comforted many parents as well as children!

Remember, we are here to support you and your child at this important time so talk to us if you have any concerns however small.



# Settling in diary for

---





Key person: .....


Parent/carers name/s: .....





## First Steps

|   |  |             |  |
|---|--|-------------|--|
| Date:   |  | Time spent: |  |
| Comments:   |  |             |  |
| Next steps:   |  |             |  |
|  |  |             |  |

|   |  |             |  |
|---|--|-------------|--|
| Date:   |  | Time spent: |  |
| Comments:   |  |             |  |
| Next steps:   |  |             |  |
|  |  |             |  |

|   |  |             |  |
|---|--|-------------|--|
| Date:   |  | Time spent: |  |
| Comments:   |  |             |  |
| Next steps:   |  |             |  |
|  |  |             |  |

|   |  |             |  |
|---|--|-------------|--|
| Date:   |  | Time spent: |  |
| Comments:   |  |             |  |
| Next steps:   |  |             |  |
|  |  |             |  |

|   |  |             |  |
|---|--|-------------|--|
| Date:   |  | Time spent: |  |
| Comments:   |  |             |  |
| Next steps:   |  |             |  |
|  |  |             |  |

### Books about going to pre-school or nursery

#### My School Bag

Board book

9780751359442

#### My First Day at Preschool

Board book

978184332143

#### My First Day at Preschool

Board book

978184332143

#### Going to Playgroup

Laurence Anholt

Picture book

9781841210513

#### Spot Goes to School

Eric Hill

Picture book

9780723249733

#### Lucy and Tom go to School

Shirley Hughes

Picture book

9780140544152

#### Nursery School with Teddy Bear

Jacqueline McQuade

Picture book

9781856024211



#### Splat the Cat

Rob Scotton

Picture book

9780007284542

#### Rosie Rabbit goes to Playschool

Patrick Yee

Picture book

9781860394256

#### Lets Go to Playgroup

Pamela Venus

Picture book

9781870516563

#### Freddie Goes to Playgroup

Nicola Smee

Picture book

9781843622116

#### Michael

Tony Bradman

Picture book

9781842709115

#### Tiddler

Julia Donaldson

Picture book

9781407106212

#### Daydream Dan

Sarah Garson

Picture book

9781842707210

## Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to all those early years settings and childminders who participated in the 'First Steps' transition pilot project.

We would like to acknowledge the many Barnet colleagues who contributed ideas to, or commented on the various parts of the 'First steps' toolkit.

Our particular thanks go to the following early years settings, colleagues and organisations.

Barnet Childminding Network Co-ordinators

Barnet Mencap

Barnet Pre-school Learning Alliance

Early Years Standards and Effectiveness Team

FYi –

Families and Young People's Information Service

Parent Partnership

Pre-school Teaching Team

School Library Service

Specialist Teaching Team

Speech and Language Therapy Service

## Early years settings

Barnet Network Childminders

Bo Peep Playgroup

Cheeky Chums Parent Toddler Group

Colindale HPA Nursery

Danescroft Playgroup

Early Learning Years Nursery

Essex Park Community Pre-school

Fairway Children's Centre

Joel Day Nursery

Langdale Pre-school

Laurel Way Playgroup

Mill Hill Pre-school

Nagila Playgroup

St Agnes Parish Toddler Group

Whizz Kids Nursery

Yavneh Playgroup

