Early Years to Reception Transition Timeline Overview

This timeline provides a framework for early years settings, schools, families and professionals to work together from the autumn term before school entry through to the child's first term in Reception.

It is intended as guidance rather than a fixed process, as some children, particularly those with additional needs, may require a more personalised approach.

Decisions about transition support should always be based on the individual child's strengths, interests, communication and support needs.

Universal Transition

Universal transition support is available to every child moving from preschool or nursery into Reception. The timeline includes helping families apply for a school place, creating an "All About Me" profile, sharing information, introducing school routines through play and visual resources, arranging visits, and checking in during the first weeks. These activities help each child feel safe, familiar with their new environment and ready for the move in their own way.

Targeted Transition

Targeted transition support is for children who may need additional help with the move to school, including children with SEND, medical needs, communication differences, limited attendance or changes in family life. These are children who may be on your SEN register or have additional vulnerabilities due to other factors. The timeline identifies individual planning, closer communication with families and professionals, helpful adjustments, extra visits and personalised resources. Support should build on what already works for the child and be reviewed after they start Reception.

Targeted Plus and Specialist Transition

Targeted Plus and specialist transition support is for children with complex needs, including those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or those with specialist support services involved where multi-agency planning for transition is needed. The timeline includes phase transfer arrangements and detailed planning between families, settings, schools, the local authority and involved services. Staffing, communication, personal care, healthcare, equipment, training, adjustments and funding should be agreed so support is ready from the first day.

Working Together

Successful transition depends on partnership working. Children, families, early years settings, schools and professionals all help each child feel known, included and supported as they move into Reception.

The aim is for every child to start Reception with the information, relationships, adjustments and opportunities they need to belong, participate and thrive.