

# ACTIVITIES TO GATHER CHILDREN'S VOICE AFTER TRANSITION.



These activities can be useful to help evaluate how children are feeling after moving to school and to measure how successful current transition practices are.

*Please remember these not all these activities need to be used with all children, use your knowledge of your cohort to decide which children will benefit from each activity. You may wish to adapt and create your own activities to listen to how your children are feeling about transition. Children should always feel valued and listened to, never pressured or tested. The experiences should be fun and you may not get the response you expected!*

Consultation Topic	Purpose	Resources	Consultation Method/Activity	Extending into practice
<b>Establish regular opportunities to find out about how children feel in school and how they can express their views, thoughts and opinions.</b>	To create a culture that recognises children's feelings, thoughts and ideas matter, and influence their ability to learn.	Books on feelings, mindfulness. An accessible and well-resourced environment that encourages children to pursue with their ideas.	<p>Teachers/practitioners to use positive interactions and opportunities to regularly validate children's feelings and help them start to understand and self-regulate them during social experiences. e.g. "I can tell you are angry because you didn't want to stop throwing the toys. I can't let you throw the toys because it may hurt another child at nursery".</p> <p>Introduce techniques and processes to help children know who and where to go to, to express their emotions. Such as, using breathing techniques to help calm and regulate powerful emotions.</p> <p>Provide opportunities throughout the day for children to share their experiences, express their feelings and views, make choices and have their own ideas. For example, story time, snack time, mindfulness activities, yoga.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging parents/ carers to support the development of emotional regulation at home using the same techniques as school.</li> <li>• Encouraging children to support each other and have empathy for the feelings of others.</li> </ul>

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<b>Establishing children's feelings about transition into school.</b>	To find out what children were most worried, happy, excited or nervous about when starting school.	Books about starting school, worrying, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'The huge bag of worries'.</li> <li>• 'Charlie and Lola – I am too absolutely small for school'.</li> </ul> <i>(see book list)</i> Or write one yourself about children worrying about going to a new place.	In small groups, read the story and ask open ended questions or model your own worries such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I might worry about where I'm going to eat my lunch.</li> <li>• I wonder what children might worry about when they are going to a new place – children will often give you their answer in the third person.</li> </ul> Talk these feelings through in order to help children understand how they may present themselves. For example, when worried you might cry or have a 'funny' feeling in your tummy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a 'worry bear' who the children can talk to.</li> <li>• Model the language of feelings.</li> <li>• Accept all feelings and help children learn how to manage them.</li> </ul>
<b>How well do children understand the routine?</b>	To establish how children are settling into the routine of school.  Do they understand what happens throughout the day?  What parts of the routine do the children like or dislike and why?	Photographs of different times of the day or the visual timetable.	In small groups, use the pictures from your visual timetable and ask the children to sort them into order.  Discuss what happens during each part of the routine. As part of this activity, you may have the opportunity to ask the children to put the photographs of the times of the day they like in one pile and if there any parts of the routine they don't like into another.  Do the children tell you that there are parts of the routine that they struggle with? Can you adapt it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the camera to ask the children to show you the things they like to do at school.</li> <li>• Can the children draw or create their routine for home – before/after school.</li> </ul>

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Finding out about what children know, like or dislike about their new school.	To support children's emotional well-being during transition.	Take photos of resources, experiences Puppet/soft toy/persona doll.	<p>Introduce a puppet/persona doll/soft toy to a small group of children. Give the puppet a name and a character, explaining that he/she will be starting at school soon.</p> <p>Encourage the children to tell the puppet/toy what it felt like to when they first started school. Encourage them to tell the puppet/toy what happens here.</p> <p>Carry out a tour of the setting with the puppet/toy and ask the children where they feel safest, where they like to play, what they didn't like when they were new.</p> <p>Ask them what they would tell the puppet /toy about coming to school/ nursery.</p> <p>Use this to gather information about how to adapt your transition processes moving forward or make any changes to help children settle in even more.</p> <p>Note: Remember to use age appropriate language. Ensure children's feelings, likes and dislikes are acknowledged and responded to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the children respond well, you may want to use a puppet/ toy to gather the views or feelings of children about other topics.</li> <li>• You may want to create a transition mascot that supports children to settle at the school, use it to help children process and understand their emotions.</li> </ul>
	To give children the opportunity to share their preferences about areas of the learning environment, both inside and outside.	Provide two photographs for two different learning areas i.e. book corner and art area; or inside area and outside area. Place a jar in front of each picture and provide counters.	<p>Ask the children to put their counter in the jar in front of the photo of the place they prefer to play. If they like both areas and cannot decide, they can put their counter in the pot for both.</p> <p>Make sure it is clear what the pictures are showing – children might select a photo due to one small part of it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the voting system for other areas of the provision to support other areas of learning and demonstrate that you are interested in the children's views and choices.</li> </ul>

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		Camera – easy use for children.	<p>Explain that you are interested to see photos of the areas where the child likes to play.</p> <p>Walk around with the child allowing them to stop where they like and to take photos.</p> <p>Also ask the child to take photos of areas they do not like as much, (you might have to point out areas you might not have liked as a child to model this; you can share your opinion in this way).</p> <p>Look through the pictures with the child and listen to their comment. Ask the child what they like or dislike about specific areas.</p> <p>Accept and value 'don't know' as an answer. Children might not have the vocabulary to express their thoughts and feelings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach all the children how to use the camera and encourage the use of this in daily practice to capture images of the things that matter to them. Always discuss these pictures.</li> <li>• Do regular 'walk and talks' with the children to hear their views on the environment.</li> <li>• Include children when you review or update areas of provision.</li> <li>• Allow children to vote as a group on small decisions such as wet or dry sand this week.</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting parents to find out how their child is feeling after starting school</b>	<p>To enable parents/carers to share information about how their child may be feeling about starting school.</p> <p>Children will often feel more comfortable talking about their feelings with their parents/carers who will know if their child is/ has been behaving differently. It is important to involve parents/carers in gathering children's views at this point as well.</p>	<p>Prompt questions</p> <p>Emotion symbols/pictures</p>	<p>Provide some guidance with prompt questions for parents/carers. You may also find the feelings 'emoji' symbols useful.</p> <p>This will help parents/carers to gather an understanding of how children are feeling about this to share with you. It will also enable them to support their child through the transition of starting school.</p> <p>N.B. Make it clear that they don't need to ask the children the questions directly, but use their observations of their child's behaviour and conversations they may have had to answer the questions provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to encourage parents/carers to ask their child for their views and ideas on any particular topics.</li> </ul>