

How do I support my child's transition?



What do we mean by transition?

A transition is a period of change, from one significant stage or experience, to another. Transitions happen when the child has to stop doing one activity and start doing something else. Some children go through multiple transitions at the same time.

As children age and develop, they inevitably experience a number of different transitions and significant events which may impact upon them in different ways (e.g., getting a new sibling, parents separating, moving home, change of teachers, starting a new school).



TRANSITIONS





Mindset

Think of a time when you experienced a period of transition.

- How did you feel emotionally, physically, cognitively?
- What did you find easy?
- What did you find difficult?
- What/who helped and why?
- What/who did not help and why?



How may transition(s) affect children?

► Emotional Effects

- Increased anxiety or worry
- Sadness or grief
- Anger or irritability
- Confusion and uncertainty
- Insecurity or low self-esteem
- Withdrawal or clinginess
- Mood swings

► Physical Effects

- Changes in sleep patterns
- Appetite changes
- Fatigue or low energy
- Headaches or stomach aches

- Regression in development (e.g., thumb-sucking, bed-wetting)
- Increased illness

► Intellectual Effects

- Difficulty concentrating
- Decline in academic performance
- Forgetfulness
- Reduced problem-solving skills
- Negative self-perception
- Hypervigilance

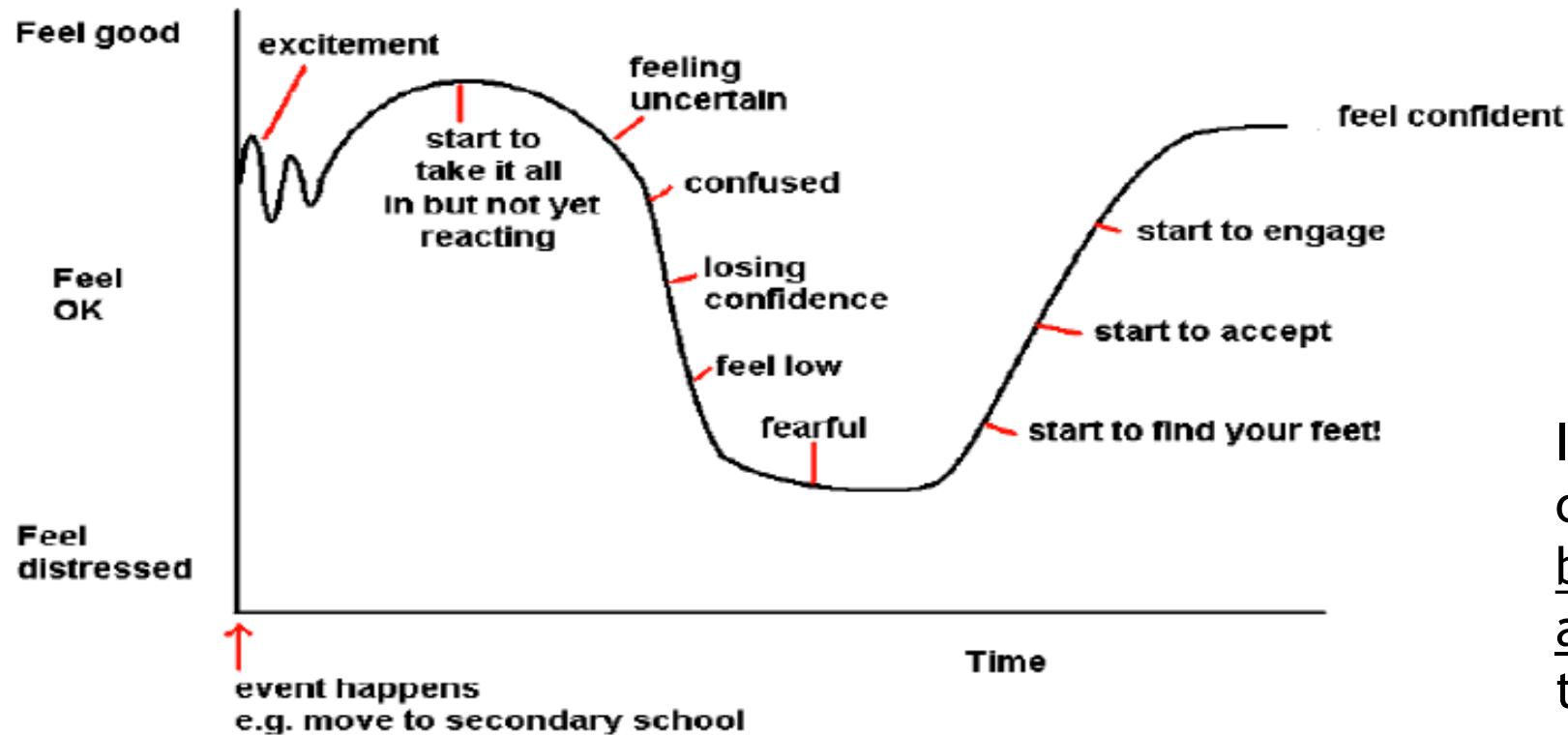




How this affects children's behaviour in school?

- ▶ **Clinginess** – wanting to stay close to trusted adults or caregivers
- ▶ **Avoidance** – reluctance to attend school or participate in activities
- ▶ **Tantrums or emotional outbursts** – especially in younger children
- ▶ **Aggression or defiance** – acting out due to frustration or lack of control
- ▶ **Withdrawal** – becoming quiet, distant, or socially isolated
- ▶ **Restlessness or hyperactivity** – difficulty settling, increased fidgeting or movement
- ▶ **Increased need for reassurance** – asking repetitive questions or seeking comfort
- ▶ **Over-compliance or people-pleasing** – trying to regain control or approval in an uncertain environment
- ▶ **Change in peer relationships**

The change curve for school transitions



It is important that children are supported before, during and after a period of transition. Transition is a process, not an event!

Emotional support - Awareness of feelings regarding the transition

- Awareness that the child could be feeling mixed emotions
- Focus on the positive but also allow space for doubts and concerns
- Reassure the child about common worries
- Share positive stories of your own transitions (where appropriate)
- Remind the child that not everything changes - identify what stays the same
- Acknowledge the change curve for the child

Practical support

- ▶ Discuss endings and new beginnings; keep conversations open and honest (problem and praise).
- ▶ Preparation language (e.g. when you're in Year 3...)
- ▶ Create environments that support transitions (systems).
- ▶ Create connections between classes and settings (transition activities)
- ▶ Retain reassuring routines. Children can accept change better when they know it's coming.
- ▶ Reduce number of uncertainties (What is the same? What is different?).
- ▶ Create visual timetables to reassure the child about new routines.



What can you do at home to support?

- Have a good understanding of things that will be the same and different.
- Talk children through the transition: before, during and after.
- Countdown to school holidays and return to school.
- Discuss concerns and feelings openly.
- Allow children time to decompress, process and reflect on their days at school.
- Attend Meet the Teacher in Autumn 1 Week 2.
- Promote independence
- Know the new topics in the next year group
- Support children with next steps identified in Summer reports and continue key skills practise over the summer e.g name writing, number bonds, daily reading and phonics practise, times tables, writing for purpose
- Maintain consistent routines e.g bedtimes

How does our PSHE curriculum support transition?

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Linked SEAL Theme	New Beginnings	Say No to Bullying/Getting on & Falling Out	Going for Goals	Relationships	Good to be Me	Changes

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Objective: To realise that growth and change are part of the process of life. <i>'How do we change as we grow?'</i>	Objective: To be able to manage 'big emotions' and know who to ask for help. <i>'How can I manage 'big' feelings and who can I turn to for help?'</i>	Objective: To understand about ways of expressing feelings and emotions and why it is important to do so. <i>'Why is it important for our mental health and wellbeing to find ways to express feelings?'</i>	Objective: To understand how to manage feelings and emotions in different situations To know about getting help, advice and support with feelings and emotions <i>'How do I manage difficult emotions and where can I turn for help?'</i>	Objective: To understand the importance of rest and relaxation and how it can make us feel happy and positive about life. <i>'Why is rest and relaxation important?'</i>	Objective: To recognise the challenges and feelings that moving to secondary school can create. <i>'How can we ensure that we have the best possible start at secondary school?'</i>
DFE Statutory Guidance: N/A	DFE Statutory Guidance: 1b, 1c, 1i, 1j, 3d	DFE Statutory Guidance: 1c, 1g, 1i, 1j	DFE Statutory Guidance: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1i, 1j	DFE Statutory Guidance: 1a, 1f	DFE Statutory Guidance: 1b
Suggested activity: Ask pupils to bring in pictures of when they were babies/toddlers. Compare photos of themselves now and in the past. Sequence as a timeline including pictures of teenagers and adults. Also look at pictures of animals and their young. Pupils talk to parents and carers about what they were like/did as a baby and re-tell these experiences in class.	Suggested activity: Maz, the alien is having a 'big' feeling. He knows it's a big feeling because his body is tense and shaking, and his fists are tight. What might his big feeling be? Explain that Maz is feeling really angry. Can they give him some advice on what he could do to help with his big feeling? Can children identify the big feeling that Maz is having? Explain that talking to an adult will not always solve a problem – but it might start to help them feel better. This is because adults have experience and can come up with ideas that might help them to feel better.	Suggested activity: Jamie feels worried a lot of the time. Everything seems to worry Jamie. It feels like all the worries in the world are building up into a big pile, sometimes it feels like a wall of worries. Pupils discuss in pairs or small groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would help Jamie express the feelings? • What might be stopping Jamie from doing this? • What might be the consequences of Jamie not expressing the feelings? • What would most help Jamie in this situation? Take feedback. Reiterate the importance of talking to someone about difficult feelings, especially if they have not so good feelings like worry, sadness or loneliness.	Suggested activity: Display the following words and phrases on the flipchart or whiteboard: nervous, embarrassed, relieved, weight-off-your-shoulders, good, unsure, ashamed, ok, relaxing. Is it likely people might feel these things when talking about their feelings and emotions? Do they feel other things? Reiterate the importance of expressing and talking about feelings especially those that feel very strong or go on for a long time. Explain that it is totally usual for people to need help with their feelings sometimes. Flag up children's websites and helplines such as Childline (www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111) and discuss when these might be needed. If pupils are not already aware of it, show them the website and how to access it.	Suggested activity: Talk about what that means. How can the children contribute? What if we all shout, run around, does that make the environment relaxing? So what sort of things can we do? Does anybody have any good strategies for calming down? - Share with class. Talk about how the environment affects our mood. If the teacher shouted all the time, if you felt nervous about school, would you feel relaxed? Is it better to be relaxed or stressed? What happens to your heart when you are stressed- it beats faster? Is this good for you all the time? Explain this is why some people have "high blood pressure". Mention the bodies need for sleep - what happens when it gets too tired - it shuts down. Sometimes an early night does wonders for the body as it catches up on sleep. Play calming music and share some breathing techniques.	Suggested activity: Discuss possible myths about moving to secondary school (see BBCBiteSize link below) e.g. getting a detention for not wearing a tie correctly. How have these myths come about? Move on to discussing why information we hear about secondary schools can be both useful and not so useful. Next discuss how children can find reliable information about secondary school – older siblings, neighbours, school websites, by going to secondary school open evenings etc. Discuss these options and which might be most useful as sources of evidence for different queries.



CHILDREN'S BOOKS TO SUPPORT

