

Implementation Story: Managing School Transitions for Children with SEND

Dainty Little Hands Kidzacademy Day Nursery

Context

Dainty Little Hands Kidzacademy Day Nursery supports children aged 2–4, including children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). As a developing nursery, the setting is still building strong relationships with local schools and external professionals. Staff recognise that transitions can be particularly challenging for children with SEND and their families, and therefore place a strong emphasis on early planning, emotional security, and clear communication.

Intent

The nursery aims to ensure that children with SEND experience a smooth, positive transition into school by: - Reducing anxiety and uncertainty for children and families - Supporting emotional wellbeing and regulation - Ensuring continuity of care and support strategies - Working in partnership with parents and receiving schools

Planning and Preparation

Transition planning begins early and is individualised for each child.

- Key persons identify children with SEND who are approaching transition and review their individual needs, strengths, and interests.
- Regular discussions are held with parents to understand concerns, routines, and expectations around school.
- SEND support plans and relevant professional advice are reviewed and updated.
- Practitioners use age-appropriate and communication-appropriate methods to explore children's feelings about moving on.

Implementation

Emotional Security and Familiarisation

- Children are supported consistently by their key person to build trust and reassurance.
- Visual timetables, now-and-next boards, and social stories are used to explain changes.
- School-related stories and role play are adapted to meet individual sensory and emotional needs.

Communication and Emotional Regulation

- Children are supported using their preferred communication methods, including visuals, gestures, or simple language.
- Staff model emotional language and calming strategies.
- Predictable routines and calm spaces support children's regulation.

Supporting Independence

- Independence skills are broken into small, achievable steps.
- Repetition, visual cues, and praise are used to build confidence.
- Expectations are flexible and adapted to the child's developmental stage.

Partnership with Schools

As a new nursery, Dainty Little Hands Kidzacademy takes a proactive and reflective approach to building relationships with schools.

- Detailed transition summaries are completed for each child with SEND.
- Information shared includes strengths, effective strategies, communication methods, and support needs.
- With parental consent, information is shared with receiving schools in advance.
- Where school visits are not yet possible, photographs and discussions are used to build familiarity.

Impact

This approach has resulted in: - Children showing increased confidence and emotional security during transition periods - Reduced anxiety-related behaviours - Parents feeling informed, listened to, and reassured - Positive feedback from schools regarding the quality of transition information

Reflection and Next Steps

Staff regularly reflect on transition outcomes during team meetings and supervision. As a developing setting, the nursery continues to: - Refine transition documentation - Strengthen partnerships with local schools and SENCOs - Adapt practice in response to children's needs

Conclusion

Dainty Little Hands Kidzacademy Day Nursery demonstrates a clear commitment to supporting children with SEND through school transitions. Through early planning, strong key person relationships, and reflective practice, the nursery ensures children and families feel supported and prepared for the next stage of learning.