

Making the transition from the Foundation Stage to key stage 1

Presentation to Early Years 2006 Conference

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Research Aim

- To provide an evidence base about the effectiveness of transition from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1



Methodology

- | Review of recent literature
- | Telephone interviews (60 schools)
- | Case studies (12 schools)



Definition of transition

The process of making a change from one environment and set of relationships to another

- It offers both challenges and opportunities for growth
- Early transitions may be particularly important



Children's views of transition

Based on interviews with:

- 70 children in Reception and Year 1





Life in Reception

Researcher: *What do you do at school?*

Girl: *Read books, colouring, play on the computer, cut and stick, play with dominoes, play in the airport, play snap, drawing pictures...*

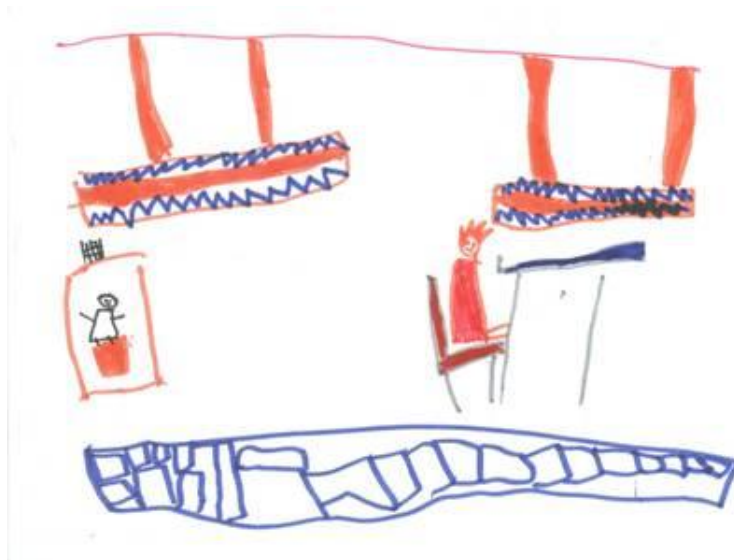
What they enjoyed in Reception

- Role play and dressing up
- Playing outside
- Playing with friends



What they expected of Year 1

- More work, harder work
- Less play, less choice
- Differences in the physical environment
- A few were worried about the work and being told off



Were they right? Life in Year 1

- More hard work
- Less play, variety and choice
- More time sitting still during 'carpet time'



Me doing writing in Year 1



Work comes first

Every time we do [work] sheets there is always a more difficult sheet to go on to next... And you can't go and play when you finish your work because there is always another sheet.



Me sitting at my table, doing my work



Disliking 'carpet time'

First Boy: *I don't like being on the carpet for a long time...*

Second Boy: *Neither do I because it is very boring*

First Boy: *And it wastes our time playing*

Second Boy: *It wastes your life*



Me sitting on the carpet in Year 1





Question for reflection

- Think about what the children said. What are the implications for practice?



Parents' views of transition

Based on interviews with:

- Over 50 parents
- Before and after the transition



Parents' expectations of Year 1

- They expected Year 1 to be different
- Some parents had concerns about changes in the balance between work and play

Nursery and reception are similar because it is all about play - but in Year 1 the hard work starts.



Information before the transition

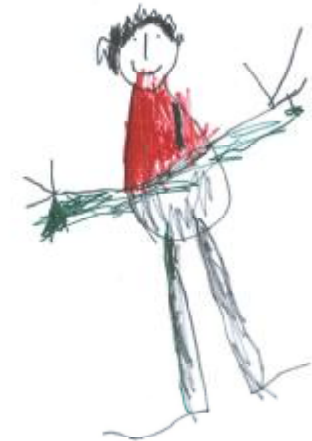
- They wanted to help their children prepare for Year 1 during the summer holidays
- They wanted to meet the Year 1 teacher in advance



Communication before the transition

Researcher: *Have you met your child's new teacher?*

Parent: *No I haven't. I would have liked to as it would have meant we could have started building a relationship.*





Communication after the transition

To be honest I don't find Mrs X that approachable and haven't really met her or had a chance to get to know her.

They seem to shoo you out quite quickly in Year 1 - it's not like in reception where they had much more of an open door policy.

Children's adjustment to Year 1

- Most parents felt their children had settled well in Year 1
- A few noticed changes in their child's attitude and behaviour
- It was not always easy for parents to discuss their concerns with the school





Question for reflection

- Think about what the parents said. What are the implications for practice?



Staff views of transition

**Based on interviews with
Over 50 members of staff**



Challenges for staff

- How to maintain FS practice while preparing for Year 1 (and 2)?
- How to introduce more formal literacy and numeracy lessons when young children find it hard to sit still?



Challenges for Reception staff

I feel torn between what the Foundation Stage Advisors are telling me to do... that it shouldn't be structured at all... But the children have to be able to do a certain amount by the time they get into Year 1.



Challenges for Year 1 staff

I am trying to adopt similar approaches [to the Foundation Stage] but it's difficult. I feel as though I am being pulled one way and another.



Settling into Year 1

- Most children settled well
- It took from a few weeks to a term
- Children experiencing difficulties were more likely to be:

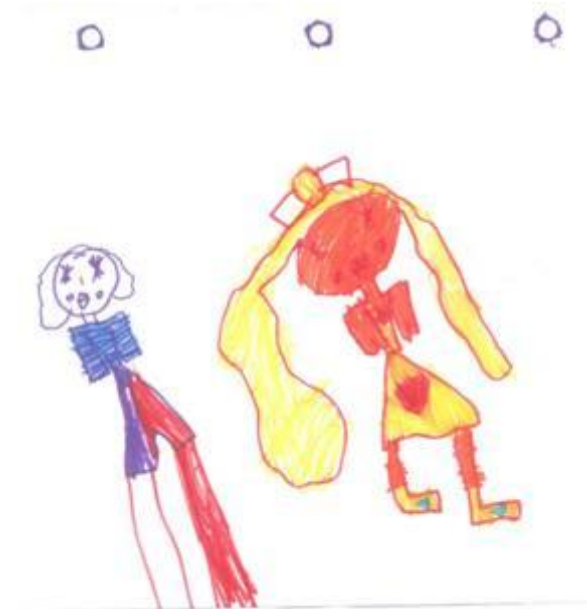
Younger, less able, or have special needs



Challenges for Year 1 staff

In comparison with Reception, Year 1 tended to have less:

- Space
- Play equipment
- Outdoor access
- Adult help





Question for reflection

- Think about what the staff said. What are the implications for practice?



Summary of changes in children's experiences

Play-based	→	Work-based
Active	→	Static
Led by adult/child	→	Directed by adults
Thematic	→	Subject-based
Emphasises a range of skills	→	Emphasises listening and writing

Conclusions

- | Transition involves children, staff and parents
- | Most children coped well with the move to Year 1
- | Curriculum and pedagogy had a clear impact on children's enjoyment of learning
- | Further guidance and training would be useful



Transition practices helped children

- Children had realistic expectations
- They were more confident about the classroom and their teacher
- They were more positive about their experiences in Year 1



What schools can do to help

Induction

- Introduce 'more structured' activities gradually
- Help children to experience larger groups
- Arrange for children to visit their new teacher and classroom – involve parents



What schools can do to help

Continuity

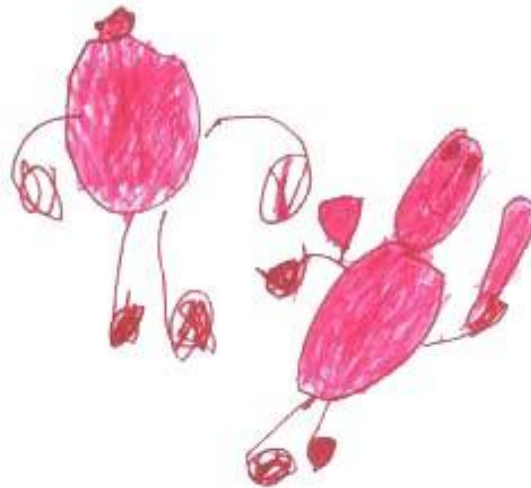
- Ensure children have familiar routines and activities
- Have staff move up with the class
- Have something for children to look forward to



What schools can do to help

Communication

- With children, parents and staff
- Before and after the transition
- Find out what children think?





For more information,
please visit:
[www.nfer.ac.uk/research
areas/earlychildhoodeduc
ation](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research_areas/earlychildhoodeducation)

*Me with two fingers in my pockets walking
along. I'm in school on my way to Room
12 where I will make a spider.*



