**Transition recommendations from The Exchange Primary team– tips and things that have worked well!**

* Using the "Reach for the Stars" activity in co-ordination with the Adventure for some clients gave them a sense of optimism in the transition as they have new goals to aspire towards, which may not have been possible with primary school resources. e.g. getting in to the school of football, achieving the Duke of Edinburgh awards, studying specific sciences like biology to become a vet.

**Tips for Parents:**

* **Promote Independence** - encourage the young person to explore, and answer their questions honestly. It can be helpful to reinforce positive experiences that the parent has had at school (e.g. classes enjoyed, teachers that looked out for them, new friends made). Help the young person think about the new experiences they will have so they can mentally prepare for the process. Increase the responsibilities that the young person will have at home. Secondary school will push them harder - develop their confidence.
* **Be Aware and Involve**d - Check in with the young person at the end of each day. Explore different feelings and issues they have. A problem discussed is a problem halved. The greatest source of strength that the young person can be aware of is the support of their family and friends. Begin the adventure together.
* **Walk Through It Together** - When children are making a big transition, it can make all the difference if they are a bit familiar with what they're getting into before jumping right into it. Help them know what to expect by walking them through the precisely what's going to be changing. If it's a change in their schedule that is causing your child anxiety, take time to go over the new schedule together. This can be common in children right before a new school year is about to start.
* **Keep Up the Routine -** No matter what your children are making a transition into, maintaining a daily routine in place helps to ease them into the process. Routines let children know what they can expect to happen each day, from the time they wake up until they go to bed. Make sure that the routine you set for your children promotes good health both physically and emotionally. This will include establishing a bedtime that allows for a healthy amount of sleep, regular meal times that include healthy options, and designated homework slots during the school year. Don't forget to carve in time for fun each day, too! Weekends and holidays may be a bit more relaxed when it comes to keeping the routine, and that is okay. Be sure that your children understand why weekend routines get to be a little looser so that making the transition back to the weekday routine is less painful. If it's possible to keep their routine similar to what it was before, that can help curb confusion and stress in your child. However, if it must change dramatically due to an entirely new set of circumstances, know that your child can adapt. Children are resilient and can acclimate to a new schedule, but still make sure you are there to offer your support and motivate them to keep moving forward with confidence
* **Seek Out Some Fun** - To help make a transition more comfortable for your children, seek out fun activities that they could get involved in. If you're moving to a new house, keep your eyes open for parks nearby that you see children playing in. You can take your children there, and perhaps they'll get to know some of the other children there. If your children are transitioning to a new school, they may not know many people around them. Talk to your children about getting involved in one or more after school clubs. This will be a way for your children to meet new people who have similar interests with your children.
* **Talk About It** - In some instances, it might not be a total surprise to you that your child isn't happy about making a transition. The unfamiliar is often scarier than it is exciting, so they might not be taking to the transition very well. Talk to your children about how they're feeling in regards to the upcoming change, and allow them to share their feelings with you. Keep a positive attitude yourself as you have these conversations with your children. As a parent, if you are confident and enthusiastic about the transition at hand, this will likely rub off on your children.

There will be ups and downs throughout the transitions, but work to maintain your positive outlook as a way to help encourage your children to do the same. Starting the conversation might not always be easy, especially if your children are reluctant to talk about what's bothering them. To help spark a conversation, try reading stories about other children who are dealing with changes might help your children to realise that others feel the same way and that it's okay.

Coping with change can be tough for people of any age, but unlike many adults, children don't always understand why transitions take place and how to handle it. As a parent, patiently work with your child and offer the support they need to move ahead into whatever it is they are about to face. Walk together through what is about to change, and get a routine in place as soon as the transition takes place. Don't forget to look for new ways to have fun to lighten the stress of a scary move. Finally, remember to encourage your child to talk about what they're feeling in order to let out their emotions. Even if it seems scary today, with healthy support, your child can overcome and succeed in the new circumstances with which they are presented.