

## Falkirk Council - Children's Services Key Transition Stages - Moving-On Successfully Transition in Play

### Guidance Paper 2.

#### Introduction

To account for the current situation, it is necessary to continue to refer to the key principles and particular considerations listed in guidance paper 1, which was issued in May 2020.

This paper gives additional details for planning transition activity work, focusing on the period between now and the first few weeks of term 1 in session 2020-2021, for young children who are:

- Beginning an ELC setting for the first time.
- Returning to an ELC setting.
- Moving from ELC to primary school.

“Playing in spaces that offer similarities, that connect them to home and with their peers will mend broken bridges and pave the way for new beginnings.”

[Education Scotland, Transitions in 2020](#)

When considering how to safely reopen our ELC settings and schools we must ensure we continue to use play-pedagogy to deliver a child-centred curriculum. We have made great strides in Falkirk over the last number of years and it would be tragic the current challenges to set us back.

This document offers practical help and to support teachers and ELC professionals as they prepare learning spaces and make plans for the return of children. We will continue to take account of any relevant national advice and issue updates accordingly.

This advice is cited within the context of transition, with the working presumption that young children are in the midst of transition right now. This transition phase will continue for a number of weeks in August while they are in their new stage.

#### National Context

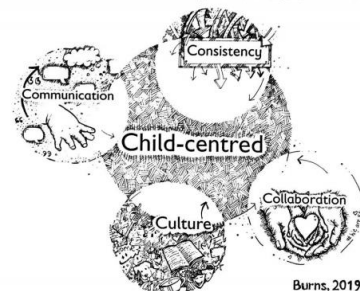
[Realising the Ambition](#) (2020) refers to the ‘five C’s that contribute to a positive transition.

These features must underpin all planning of transition experiences.

As well as the national guidance itself, Falkirk Educational Psychology Service has exemplified further key considerations for adults within each of these features. This can be found [here](#) (glow login required).

The five ‘C’s that contribute to a positive transition

The five ‘C’s that contribute to a positive transition



## Falkirk Council - Children's Services Key Transition Stages - Moving-On Successfully Transition in Play

### Guidance Paper 2.

#### Prioritising Wellbeing

Supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of our young children must be the major focus at all stages of transition and establishing and maintain good communication with families will be key.

The focus in the first few weeks must also be on establishing caring relationships between adults and children to support the development of self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy and a positive attitude to learning which are key features of resilience, future emotional well-being and cognitive achievement

Fabian, 2007

Together with parents it is important to be aware (on the front foot) for signs of stress or unease in children which might include:

- Refusal to come in to school or nursery.
- Inability to focus on their play and learning.
- Experiencing mood swings – tearful, tantrums.
- Regressive behaviours (which may include bed-wetting or thumb-sucking).
- Difficulty in regulating emotions (such as uncontrollable crying or aggressive behaviours).
- Change in sleep patterns (often resulting in disturbed sleep patterns).
- Change in eating habits (which may mean a loss of appetite or comfort eating).

*[Adapted from Mine Conkabyir, ABC Does, Blog Post \(2020\)](#)*

Of course the key is to *prevent* these behaviours occurring, as once they do, it is more difficult to reverse the impact. Understandably, children may temporarily display one or two of these behaviours as a natural response to transitions or their stage of development. However, where multiple behaviours of this nature persist, timely supports should be sought.

We do know that play and playfulness offers strong mitigation against these negative responses. This is illustrated beautifully in this poster: [29 Reasons Why Play Is So Important During Times of Crisis and Stress](#) (source Playground Equipment.com)

Nurture based approaches are central to establishing relationships, environments and experiences that foster recovery and resilience toward emotional well-being. There are a range of resources available to support nurture in schools. These are listed in the reference section at the end of the document.

There is a good understanding across Falkirk of Leuven Scales of Involvement and Wellbeing. These scales and the underlying thinking are especially useful at this time. A helpful summary document of the scales and ten action points is provided [here](#) (glow login required).

## Falkirk Council - Children's Services Key Transition Stages - Moving-On Successfully Transition in Play

### Guidance Paper 2.

It is very important that children are not 'moved-on' too quickly and forced to leave behind those relationships that remain significant. Here are some suggestions as to how existing connections can be used to support young children in transition:

- ELC keyworkers/staff record stories for use in primary 1 using, for example, QR codes.
- Skype or Microsoft Teams 'meetings' with ELC keyworkers reading stories/teaching songs at story/gathering; and, to deliver short messages of praise, etc.
- Recordings/videos of parents reading stories for children to view individually or as a group (also to support settling).

Scottish Book Trust have developed Nursery to Primary transition materials. These can be found [here](#), which will support some of the suggestions above.

### Environment, Experiences and Interactions

We also know that a high degree of personalisation through the curriculum and towards each child builds rapport and establishes in young children feeling of self-worth and positive identity. One major aspect to capitalise upon is the small group setting that will be in place as part of the recovery journey provides rich opportunities for a highly personalised approach.

The environment should give signals to children as to what is important and what the routines are. Environments should be uncluttered giving children adequate space to play and explore the experiences on offer to them.

Environments and learning spaces need to reflect the culture, skills, interests and needs of each child and family. Transition activity prior to children entering their new stage or returning to ELC needs to be targeted towards gathering information about the child's:

- Likes and dislikes
- Favourite stories, toys, characters, TV programmes
- Their family, people they love, pets, friends
- Cultural celebrations and important dates e.g. birthdays
- Important life events – birth of a sibling

This information should be used to plan the environment for children during this transition phase.

- A personal box can be set-up for children to explore with an adult.
- The use of photographs of children and their family should be used as the key provocation for other learning. Small invitations can be set-up for children using their own photos and mini-mes for small world and role play (cardboard figurines with photos of children and family).
- Create movies / slideshows for children to watch of themselves – this can be like a play cinema.

## Falkirk Council - Children's Services Key Transition Stages - Moving-On Successfully Transition in Play

### Guidance Paper 2.

Planned experiences during the first few weeks need to support children to settle in to their new environment. Given the part-time nature of the model, the settling period will span over a longer duration than usual. It is important that this investment of time and focus is regarded as part of the child's learning experience. It is not an add-on to it.

The focus during the first few weeks is:

- Familiarisation with the learning space. The younger the child, the more constant the environment needs to be.
- Establishing and practising daily routines.
- Developing personal bonds and rapport with key adults and friends, known and new.
- Opportunities for lots of engagement in familiar learning opportunities. During this time don't be afraid to introduce toys and objects that children would play with at home, for example, Sylvania's or Paw Patrol. These objects support engagement in play and allow children to confidently 'know the rules' which generally supports adults being invited in to the play. These need to be provided by the setting within zones as children cannot bring their own toys to nursery or school for now.
- Daily outdoor play and learning opportunities maximising adventurous discovery play.
- Lots of together times for talking, stories, signing & rhymes and group games. [Story picture books to support young learners in transition](#) (glow login required)

The role of the skilled practitioner in play is key. At this time during transition, play is used as a context for building relationships, embedding connections and building rapport.

There is much written about the value of positive playful interactions with young children. These interactions represent invaluable teaching moments and, therefore to engage with children in play is a powerful pedagogical approach in the early years.

In all interactions it is important to convey to children that they are already skillful and competent, to build upon their existing skills and knowledge (prior learning) and to draw upon what is most relevant to them.

- These excellent [listening and participation resources](#) from the National Children's Bureau support approaches to engaging with young children about issues that matter to them.
- The [Ten Ways](#) (glow login required) guide supports sustained shared thinking and supports depth in learning.
- Refer children to visual signals in the environment to support their independence where possible.
- Build in together times and be conscious to spend one-to-one time with each child across their time in the setting each week.
- By involving parents/carers, create opportunities for talking and listening about what matters to children. The [Compass Points](#) (glow login required) approach provides a useful guide for these conversations.
- Make reference to previous successes.
- Use reassuring language reinforcing the community and group identity.

## Falkirk Council - Children's Services Key Transition Stages - Moving-On Successfully Transition in Play

### Guidance Paper 2.

## Implementing Play in COVID-19 Recovery

We are pleased to share for the first time, via this paper, [Falkirk's Play Is the Way guidance](#) (glow login required), which was originally planned for publication by the end of June. The intervention of COVID-19 has prevented us adding in all exemplification at this time, however, we will continue to populate glow so that hyperlinks can be used in due course.

It is important to share this guidance at this time so that this additional advice can be set within a broader context.

We will plan further opportunities next session for further engagement with the guidance. This [Sway](#) presentation provides a summary of the key points of guidance, which may be helpful for staff at this time.

Scottish Government advice states that settings can operate safely without the need for physical distancing within groups of children providing that:

- Enhanced hand hygiene and cleaning practices are in place and adhered to.
- Children are organised in small groups.
- There is minimal contact between these groups.
- Use of outdoor space is maximised.
- Physical distancing is rigorously observed between adults and older children in the setting including parents at drop-off and pick-up times.

Children should be given prolonged time and opportunities to engage in free play throughout the day to follow their own line of enquiry or individual interest (Realising the Ambition, 2020). While undoubtedly more challenging currently, a play curriculum remains achievable if cleaning protocols are in place and adhered to.

General principles:

- Resources cannot be shared between different groups. It may be worth considering an A set of resources and a B set of resources. Sets should be clearly marked as such and all practitioners in the team should be clear as to what sets apply to what groups.
- Materials can be quarantined for 48 hours if there is difficulty with volume of cleaning.
- Putting materials outside for quarantining and/or drying also helps.
- Toys and equipment that children access should be cleaned each day; between sessions and at the end of the day or in the morning before the session begins, using standard detergents and disinfectants that are active against viruses and bacteria.
- Children should be discouraged from bringing toys from home to the setting. However, young children, particularly when settling, may require a transitional object or toy as a comforter. These objects should be stored safely in a lidded box. These should be cleaned thoroughly when children arrive and again before being taken home.
- We want young children to be comfortable and cosy during play and learning, however, soft furnishings such as throws, cushions and blankets not required should be removed. If required, these should be for individual children and should be washed after use.

## Falkirk Council - Children's Services Key Transition Stages - Moving-On Successfully Transition in Play

### Guidance Paper 2.

Where children sleep or nap in the setting children should have individual bedding, stored in individual bags and this should be laundered after each block of time in the setting.

Click the link for a full list of [useable resources and cleaning protocols](#) (glow login required). This guide details the core experience that can be offered and within these resources that can be used and those that should not.

A suggested clearing products order form is given [here](#) (glow login required).

### Outdoor Play & Learning

- The use of the outdoor environment should be used **as much as possible**.
- Children remain in their key groups and do not mix with other children in other key groups.
- Key groups of children can move between indoors and outdoors spaces which are allocated to them only. In the outdoor area, zones should be set-up to demarcate where groups of children can play safely within their key groups. This does not need to involve physical barriers but may require physical distance.
- While outdoors, children have more freedom to explore, be creative and be independent although handwashing should be practiced outdoors.
- Groups should have access to a sheltered area. A separate area for each group should be identified.
- Going off-site is permitted. Children in groups can adopt their own area off-site.
- Walks to the local community are permitted provided that children are in identified small groups with key adults assigned to the group. Care should be taken when in the community to observe physical distancing from other groups.
- A clean-down protocol should be practiced when coming indoors having been outside. This must include handwashing and cleaning faces with a wet wipe.
- Outdoors suits need to be removed and either quarantined for 48 hours or cleaned down, unless these are assigned to that group solely.
- These very helpful [Make Time for Outdoor Play](#) ideas from Inspiring Scotland, based around the themes of bugs and birds, are useful for both in-setting experiences and for learning at home.

## Falkirk Council - Children's Services Key Transition Stages - Moving-On Successfully Transition in Play

### Guidance Paper 2.

#### Organisation of the indoor space

- Play spaces should be decluttered with play experiences being well-spaced out.
- Where possible, the learning space should be well ventilated by opening doors and windows, where is safe to do so. Keeping doors open also reduces contact with door handles and minimises transmission. Fire doors should remain closed.
- Children must be given sufficient space to move around and to engage appropriately with the play experiences on offer.
- The offer of smaller areas to support individual and paired play should be considered.
- Children can move freely around their assigned play space and can freely interact with other children in the group.
- In addition to the base classroom, central spaces can be used provided resources are quarantined for a full 48 hours before use by a different group. In the 2-1-2 model, group 1 can use the space on Monday and group two can use the space on Thursday.

#### Resources to Support Play and Learning

- Play environments should be designed to promote developmentally appropriate learning opportunities. Within their assigned learning space, children can move freely and select from the range of play and learning resources available.
- Resources need to be carefully chosen to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum which supports the holistic development of the young child. The overall space available will be limited so a fewer number of resources, presented in smaller trays or boxes may help this become more manageable.
- Resources should be allocated to a learning space. Resources cannot be transferred from one learning space to another.
- Resources that are visibly soiled must be removed and cleaned according to [infection control guidelines](#).
- Resources must be washed and cleaned according to the [infection control guidelines](#) in the changeover of groups. If resources cannot be washed, they should be quarantined for a full 48 hours before being reused by a different group of children.

## Falkirk Council - Children's Services Key Transition Stages - Moving-On Successfully Transition in Play

### Guidance Paper 2.

#### Home learning

During the lockdown phase, Falkirk early years teachers and ELC professionals have found creative ways to keeping in contact with children who were not able to attend school or nursery.

- The Early Years Central Team has collated examples of approaches being delivered from across Falkirk and clusters. These are in the form of SWAY presentations here:
  - [Connecting with children and families during lockdown](#)
  - [Play at Home](#)
- Every effort should be made to make connections between learning at home and learning in the setting. Parents should be asked to share learning from home through digital platforms so that these can be revisited with practitioners and peers.
- Any transition themes should be used as the starting point for new learning in primary 1.
- Early Years Scotland has published a Top Tips for parents on learning at home activities covering a wide range of themes: literacy, numeracy, science, health and wellbeing, music, and outdoor learning. A selection from the series is available to download [here](#).
- We have prepared this [information leaflet](#) for parents of new primary 1 pupils.



**Falkirk Council - Children's Services**  
**Key Transition Stages - Moving-On Successfully**  
**Transition in Play**

**Guidance Paper 2.**

**Resources**

**Outdoor Play & Learning**

[Inspiring Scotland - Make Time for Outdoor Play](#)

[Outdoor Play In Emergency Care Settings](#)

[Fully Outdoor Childcare Providers Guidance](#)

[Hygiene Requirements in Outdoor Nurseries in Scotland](#)

**Nurture & Wellbeing**

[Infection Control Guidelines in Daycare Settings](#)

[Hand Hygiene Information to Support Improvement](#)

[Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach](#)

[National Children's Bureau: Listening & Participation Resources](#)

[Leuven Scales of Involvement & Ten Action Points Summary](#) (glow login required)

[Falkirk Council – Education Psychology Services – Nurturing Schools Pack](#)

[Falkirk Council – GIFREC Practitioner pages – Nurture](#)

[The Ten Ways Guide to Powerful Interactions](#)

[Compass Points](#)

**Social Stories**

[Social Stories for COVID-19](#)

[National Autistic Society – Social Story Guidance and Templates](#)

[Social Stories Guidance and Free Resources – Blog Post](#)

[How to write social stories](#)

[Communication Friendly Environments](#)

**Literacy**

[Story picture books to support young learners in transition](#) (glow login required)

[Scottish Book Trust – Nursery – P1 materials](#)

## Falkirk Council - Children's Services Key Transition Stages - Moving-On Successfully Transition in Play

### Guidance Paper 2.

#### Texts and publications

- [Scottish Early Childhood and Families Transitions Statement and Resources](#)
- [Realising The Ambition](#)
- Fabian, Hilary & Dunlop, Aline-Wendy. (2007). Outcomes of Good Practice in Transition Process for Children Entering Primary School.
- [Falkirk Council – Children's Services - Information leaflet for primary 1 parents](#) (glow login required – also on Falkirk Council website)

#### Support, guidance and professional learning materials

Over the last few years, the Early Years Central Team has created a wealth of resources and materials to support play pedagogy in ELC and primary, including professional learning resources and guidance. You can follow the team on Twitter @FCEYTeam

These materials can be found on glow [here](#). The glow site is not the best to navigate, so please feel free to get in touch if there is something that you are looking for but cannot find via the link officer below in the first instance.

Braes	<a href="#">Gemma Paterson</a>
Bo'ness & St Mary's	<a href="#">Elaine Craigen</a>
Denny & St Patrick's & St Joseph's	<a href="#">Cheryl Smyth</a>
Falkirk & St Francis Xavier	<a href="#">Fiona Pascall</a>
Graeme & St Andrew's	<a href="#">Susan McElhatton</a>
Grangemouth & Sacred Heart	<a href="#">Gemma Paterson</a>
Larbert & St Bernadette's	<a href="#">Elaine Craigen</a>

Our Early Learning blog is also a good source of information and support. The posts are updated regularly by the team. These can be accessed [here](#).