



ELC Transition Policy

Aim

To ensure children experience a smooth and nurturing transition when starting at the Early Learning Centre (ELC), fostering a sense of value and welcome for both children and families.

As outlined in Section 8.1 of *Realising the Ambition – National Practice Guidance for Early Years in Scotland* (2020), transitions for children are defined as “changes to their social environment.” Children and young people experience many transitions, both daily (horizontal) and significant (vertical). Daily transitions include moving from play to mealtimes or from outdoor to indoor play. Significant transitions may involve events such as the birth of a sibling, moving house, changes in family circumstances, and transitioning into ELC.

In line with *Realising the Ambition*, “transition should be a process, not a single event” (Section 8.2). Our approach reflects this by ensuring continuity, nurturing relationships, and respecting individual needs as children adapt to their new environment.

Pre-Start Transition Process

At Stow ELC, following enrolment (approximately one month prior to the child’s start date outlined in your offer letter), the Early Years Officer will contact families by telephone. During this initial contact, a brief discussion will take place about hours, settling-in arrangements, and an agreed date for an initial visit with the child to the setting.

This initial visit will last between 30 minutes to one hour and provides an opportunity for families to:

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- ask questions.
- meet the staff involved in their child's care.
- allow the child to explore the learning environment using their natural curiosity.

At the end of this visit, families will receive their child's "kit bag," which includes:

- the child's Care Plan, providing insight into their individual needs and circumstances, reviewed termly.
- a list of daily essentials to bring to ELC, to be kept in their kit bag onsite.

All children will be offered an additional visit, which can be attended with parents or an alternative caregiver. During this visit, we encourage caregivers to leave the child for a short period (1 Hour) while waiting in the reception or local area. This visit helps build the child's sense of independence.

"Secure, responsive relationships and positive interactions are the golden thread in providing the right support for children" (Realising the Ambition, Section 5.1). Our staff use this principle to ensure every child feels supported during their transition into the setting.

Settling-In Process

While most children transition into ELC smoothly, some may require additional support, especially if they have not spent much time away from their primary caregivers. In these cases, we work closely with families to create a positive transition experience.

Our skilled and qualified staff provide nurturing support, using play to comfort and calm children. If needed, a "soft start" can be arranged, gradually building the child's time in the setting. For example, children may attend half-day sessions before transitioning to full days. This flexible approach respects the protected core learning times.

Separation anxiety is a normal part of child development, and drop-offs may be challenging for some families. While some parents may prefer a "drop-and-go" approach, others may wish to settle their child before leaving. We recommend parents stay no longer than 10-15 minutes in the room, actively encouraging their child to join

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the ELC routine. Parents are welcome to wait in the reception area or leave the premises entirely if they prefer.

As stated in *Realising the Ambition*, “*the importance of ensuring children feel safe and secure cannot be underestimated*” (Section 5.3). Our staff are highly skilled in creating environments where children feel nurtured and respected, allowing them to build confidence during transitions.

Ongoing Parental Involvement

While parents are always welcome in our setting, we recognise that prolonged presence can sometimes disrupt the routine or be unsettling for other children. To balance this, we host monthly “stay and play” sessions, lasting approximately one hour. These sessions offer parents the opportunity to actively engage in their child’s learning journey and strengthen their connection with the ELC environment.

Additionally, parents may be invited to share their skills and expertise in line with the setting’s planned learning activities. This will be arranged through prior consultation and agreement to ensure alignment with the curriculum and a positive experience for all.

“Strong, trusting partnerships with families are central to enabling children to flourish” (Realising the Ambition, Section 4.3). We aim to foster these partnerships through consistent communication and meaningful involvement opportunities for families.

Our Commitment

We are committed to working in partnership with families to ensure every child experiences a smooth, positive, and nurturing transition into ELC. By fostering confident and resilient individuals, we aim to support children in embracing the new opportunities provided within our learning community.