



Baby Steps: Why First transitions Matter

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Starting points

- Government funding means that increasing numbers of babies are coming into childcare at nine months
- This transition represents a huge step in babies' and their families' lives
- A successful transition is essential
 - to create a template for future separations
 - to create a template for future parent-professional trust and interactions

Development Matters

- Understanding typical attachment behaviours is useful in supporting this transition
- Attachment behaviours are linked to cognitive development as well as physical development
 - At nine months most are showing preferences between primary carers
 - They are social referencing and benefit from co-regulation to regulate their emotions
 - Showing wariness towards strangers

Separation responses

- In the next few months, the strength of separation responses increase
- More time and care will be needed to help babies form a relationship before separation
- Social referencing means that babies will be acutely aware of parental emotions
- Working with parents will be key to successful transition

Being aware of parents' anxieties

I don't want to leave my baby

Can I really trust this person?

What if my baby stops recognising/loving me?

Will my baby be left alone to cry?

Will my baby be happy?

Sharing information

- Sharing information is key to successful transitions
- Sharing information includes watching what parents say and do e.g. nap times
- Share with the parents the setting's routine and discuss how the child's needs will be accommodated within it
- Talk through how settling in may work in practice

Play preferences

Naps

Culture and Languages

Lots to talk through!

Previous experiences of being away from primary carer

Food and drink

Nappy changes

Early likes and dislikes of the baby

Slide in/ Slide out model

- Consider using a 'slide in/ slide out model'
- Consider encouraging parents to join you at snack time or when you are out and about
- Make sure you have time to interact fully with the baby
- Once the baby is relaxed with you, encourage the parent to do some popping in and out –a few minutes to start with
- See how the baby reacts and encourage parents to start saying 'Bye' as they pop out.
- Plan several short sessions before starting

Final checks

- Does the baby look at you when you hold them?
- Can you calm the baby down quickly when upset?
- Will the baby eat when they are alone with you?
- Can you get the baby down for a nap?
- Can parents say 'bye- bye' and go?
- Are parents aware that a few tears on separation is normal?