

## How Can Children's Transitions to Primary School Be Supported

### **Kathryn (Aviary Nursery Manager):**

*'What works well is parents not talking to them about it too early and worrying them and saying 'Oh soon you'll be going to the big school'...well soon is a long time away for them. So to talk about it but not consistently talk about it and to value what they're doing now. The dialogue between us and the school is very important and the school to phone us even when they've got the child, you know to just go 'when he did this what did you do?' And it would be lovely if we could go into the school when the child starts in September, but often schools don't want us cos they think it will confuse the child whereas I feel it will give them stability because they know we still...we know the school, it's fine, they know us, you can be safe here. Because they've been safe here and no they think we...it will confuse them too much if we go in early.'*

*The thing is transitions have been so varied that it's difficult to know...we've done really good ones, you know when you've done a really good one and the child just settles in there, they're happy. It's more the children going to special school we, in the past have felt that they haven't listened to what we've done here and they've put them straight into special school rather than actually 'this year our children they need to be doing what all year R (Reception) children are doing' or giving the opportunity to do all year R children are doing...which is playing...not sitting working...yeah.*

*I think digital stories about their transition would be amazing. If, you know teachers don't have time, I know they're busy, but to have something that comes along they could just click on at some point in the day and go 'oh that's what they were doing, that's what they look like and then to show the child and start maybe a dialogue about ... what's you know...here we have photographs of them from home in a photograph album. So for them to have something that moves, cos they all like iPads, and they could see and then the teacher could 'oh you're outside, look there's outside' and relates to them. It could be done with still photographs, but actually a digital story...they're interested in iPads, Riley loves an iPad, loves an iPad, so there's something that he can do and then they could, then the school to put something on the story that builds on what he's already done and maybe home to put something on the story that builds on something that's already there, yeah.'*

### **Gareth (Inclusion Teacher):**

*'As far as some of the big things...what I always hope what happen and perhaps happen more than has ever done is I hope that the teachers from school would be able to come in and actually spend time individually with the children here rather than just come in and speak to us. I think, that's a big ask cos obviously they've still got children in their governing class, so I understand that is a challenge but what I would really value is that they come in and they speak to us which is great, but I'd also like them to come in maybe a separate time and actually just try and play with the children a little bit to add that real...and that's why I*

*think this would help cos if they can see some of the videos of what those children are doing, they're actually be able to see what it is actually like for the children, how they understand it and they will also then have their own opinions on 'I think this child does this because of this thing' and they can have that information to colour things themselves rather than just the stuff I've tried to ... a few minutes talking to them about, so...'*

**Sarah (Early Years Professional):**

*'I don't know if the school can provide like a book with their teachers' picture and....but the parents not to use it too early. We don't want to stare them up, stare the children up. Once they've started they get the book and then they read it every day with their parents at home, I think it's got to be fairly immediate, I don't see them any point, do you? Having them over the summer? It's too long, it's too long. So, say they went to their first session at the new school with their parents, meet the teacher, see the classroom, get their book, then they've got their support haven't they? At home. Now it's real...(the researcher 'because they can see it...'), they can see it, they can see it at home, you know.*

*I think that parents want a certainty. You know, because it's uncertainty that feeds insecurity...yes, we all have to deal with a certain amount of uncertainty in life, don't we? But here they are, they have a child who they have all the usual concerns of a parent as well as the extra ones and they've had a year maybe longer with us and they've got over that kind of like 'oh I've let my baby go, it's been OK, it's not been perfect but it's been OK and now I've got to do it again, he's going somewhere new, what's he gonna be like? how he's gonna cope? You know...so I would like to see the parents get much more certainty, much earlier in the process and...so that they can hang on to that.'*

**Gary (Early Years Practitioner):**

*'Don't start going into it thinking 'oh he's got Autism, he's gonna be difficult', treat him like he hasn't got anything and I think then you'll find what they can or can't do but not thinking 'oh he won't be able to do that cos he got Autism'. Well, no...yes he can't do it this way but what other ways can we do that he can do it. I think that's the big thing, don't go straight away looking at the label, cos...it's not fair on the child because you're already doubting his ability when actually he can just shock you. Don't just look at them as they have Autism, look beyond that.'*