

Transition Guide

for Parents and Carers of pupils with SEND

Any transition point can be a worrying and stressful time for children/ young people and parents/carers, especially for children with SEND. A smooth transition is essential to support the emotional health and wellbeing of your child. Children/ young people who are well supported, learn positive ways of coping with change. Try not to let your child see that you are anxious. Remember, you are your child's greatest teacher and role model.



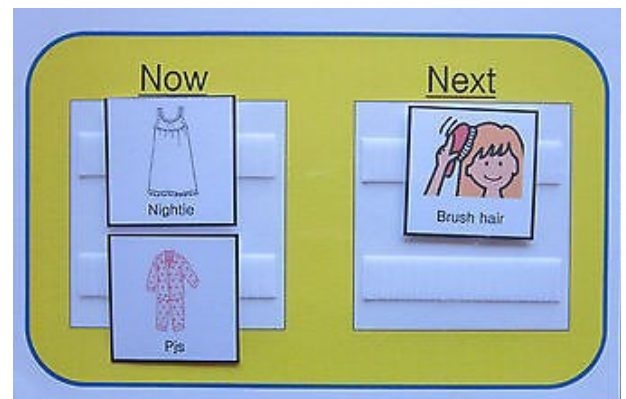
Whichever transition point your child is at, this guide has been put together to give you some practical tips and advice that may make this time a little smoother and less of a worry. Remember, there is a lot of support from professionals available for you within North Lincolnshire.

Getting ready and leaving the house



At whatever stage of transition your child is going through, new routines and time restraints can be an added pressure to you and your child, particularly in a morning.

One of the best ways to promote independence and reduce stress in a morning is to use a visual time-table or a Now and Next board.

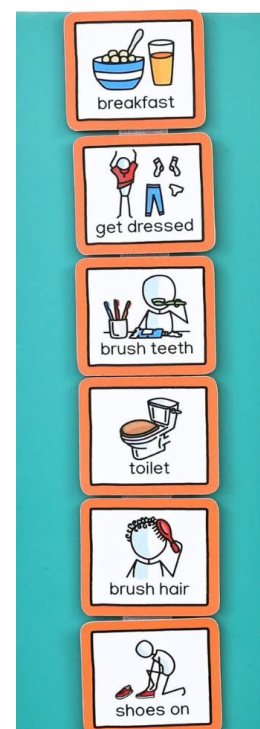


What are visual timetables?

Visual timetables are a simple, highly successful tool for communicating routines and expectations to children/young people. They can motivate them and avoid the adult needing to repeat instructions over, and it builds independence.

Why use a visual timetable?

- They are easier to understand than words or a list.
- They take the pressure off verbal language skills and give more time to process.
- They can reduce anxiety.
- They provide information about what is happening now and next
- They build independence.



Transition within the Early years

Is your child due to start at a nursery or a child minders?

As parents / carers, the decision to send your child to nursery, preschool or a child minder is one of the first, big milestones. It marks the beginning of their educational journey and sets the foundation for their future learning experiences.

Leaving your child for the first time can be worrying for you, even if you have known about it for some time.

Before your child starts, you might feel nervous about how they'll settle in or how you'll feel when you leave them for the first time.

But at the same time, you're probably looking forward to them getting their first experience of independence, as well as getting some extra time to yourself - whether that's to work, study, get through a to-do list or simply take some time to re-charge your own batteries.



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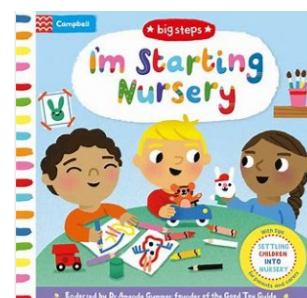


TOP TIPS to support you and your child on their journey:

- 1) **Don't pretend it is not happening**— talk to your child about it and walk past the building to familiarise yourselves. Share pictures, videos and social stories.
- 2) **Visit the setting**— visit the setting together. It's a good time to get to try activities together that you know they'll be interested in.
- 3) **Share key information and ask questions**—you know your child best, so share key information that will help staff to get to know them and help to settle them. Ask lots of questions when you visit, so you feel less anxious and more comfortable when the start date arrives. Make sure if you have professionals supporting your child/ family you inform the new setting.
- 4) **Show excitement**— Children pick up on your emotions much easier than you may realise so if you seem enthusiastic, this will help!
- 5) **Clothing**—dressing in comfy clothes and ones that are easy to pull up and down will support with developing your child's independence. They WILL get messy from all the fun, so send spare or have a separate set of 'setting clothes' that you don't mind getting well-worn.
- 6) **Sleep patterns**— these may differ once they start at their new setting. Talk to staff and share your child's routine and keep a track of sleep at the setting to help when they get home.
- 7) **Preparing a 'goodbye' routine**—A consistent and comforting farewell ritual, such as a special hug or a secret handshake, can reassure your child that you will return to pick them up. This simple practice can make transitions smoother for both you and your child.
- 8) **Getting used to being away from you**—If you're in the position to do so, leading up to the start date leave your child with someone familiar (like a grandparent) for an hour or so. This will get them used to the idea of you leaving, but will at the same time reassure them that you will come back.
- 9) **Winding down**—Give your child time to relax when you have collected them. When you collect them, they may be tired or grumpy and in need of a nap. Use this quiet time to share a book together, have a cuddle and relax!
- 10) **Handling tears**—Your child may cry when you leave them, and this can be very upsetting to see and hear. Rest assured, they most likely will have stopped by the time you get to the end of the path. Give the setting a call a little later to check in if you still feel worried.
- 11) **Transitional Object**—Keeping something in a pocket can help anxiety, or bringing in a special item from home, something familiar/ comforting to the child (nothing too precious though!).

Resources and signposting:

- [Nursery information for parents - NDNA](#)
- Sleep: <https://www.kids.org.uk/contact/>
- [Starting school or nursery: 5 top tips and 10 books to try | BookTrust](#)
- Barnardo's <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/support-for-send-children/supporting-your-child-special-educational-needs-settle-school>
- [Serve and Return: Back-and-forth exchanges](#)

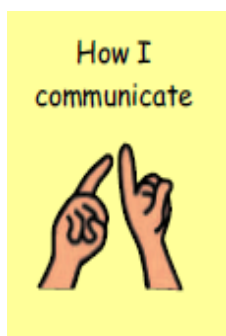


Starting Primary School

Transitions can be difficult and emotional for both you and your child. Nurseries, care providers, professionals and school should work with you and your child to ensure that your child's transition into school is seamless. It is a joint effort between you all. You may feel conflicting emotions: proud that your child is growing up, and at the same time sad that they're not babies anymore. This is perfectly normal.

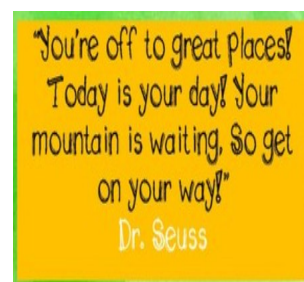
Parent's checklist:

- ◆ Uniform, bag, lunch box, water bottle etc...have you got everything they will need for their first day?
- ◆ Label anything and everything!
- ◆ Attend any transition visits.
- ◆ Attend any meetings or visits to school, and if you cannot attend, ask for any key information to be sent to you.
- ◆ Tell the school everything about your child – do they have any SEND needs? Requirements? Anything their teacher should know? This can usually be done during a home visit or arranged visit to the school.
- ◆ If there are any professionals working with your family/ child, a transition meeting should be arranged to share key information.
- ◆ Give the school copies of any reports, documents or diagnosis' that will help them to know/ understand your child.
- ◆ Ask about school communication such as apps/ communication channels that are used.
- ◆ Ensure you can access or know about school lunches and how these are ordered.
- ◆ Ensure you know where and what time to drop off and collect your child from school.



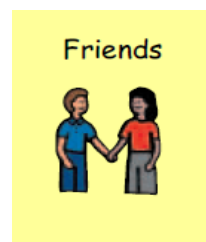
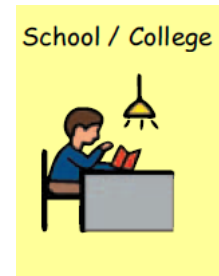
Helpful hints and things to remember:

- * Some children settle into primary school life quickly and with ease and some take a little more time. Don't worry if they're tearful or clingy, it's normal and they should settle quickly once they're in the environment.
- * If your child seems tired at the end of the day, let them have some quiet time or nap once home, if they're hungry give them a healthy snack and drink to help get their energy levels back.
- * It's also a good idea to let your child get used to school life before introducing any after-school activities. Keeping the first few weekends quiet, may give them some time to recharge.
- * Keep chatting with your child about their feelings about school, setting aside some special time to chat about their day.
- * Some children may lose enthusiasm about school over time, if this happens use a calendar (with visuals or colour codes if possible to support easy access). This will help them understand when weekends and holidays are, and arrange a few treats, so they have something to look forward to!
- * Finally, be sure to form a friendly and open relationship with your child's teacher, they're an expert in what they do, so will be able to help if you have any concerns or worries as the school year progresses.



Top tips to help get your child ready for school:

- ⇒ Ensure that your child has a good routine when it comes to bedtime. A good night's sleep will help your child cope with the demands of the school day.
- ⇒ Encourage your child to be as independent as possible by practising dressing and undressing themselves. Elastic waistbands and Velcro shoes can help build your child's confidence with these tasks. At school, your child may need to be able to dress and undress for PE.
- ⇒ Support your child to try new foods, eat at the table using a knife, fork and spoon, and use an open cup to drink from.
- ⇒ Encourage your child to tidy up and look after their belongings at home. Your child will be expected to hang their coat on their peg and tidy the activities away that they have been playing with in the classroom.
- ⇒ Children need praise and encouragement with general day-to-day tasks, especially when they have achieved new goals. Praise encourages positive self-esteem and self-worth.
- ⇒ Read books together about starting school and chat about starting school and show them the school's website or brochure.
- ⇒ Play listening games to help with following instructions. 'Simon Says' or 'Can you find?' games are great for this.
- ⇒ Help develop your child's communication skills by playing, talking, singing and reading regularly with them. If they find communication difficult– encourage them to use simple Makaton signs.
- ⇒ Teach them useful phrases such as 'can I join in' or 'do you want to share?'.
- ⇒ Get them familiar with how their name looks on paper and help them practice writing it down themselves (but don't worry if they can't do this by the time school starts, reassure them that they will be able to do this soon).
- ⇒ Ensure they're confident (or are in the process of learning) vital self-care skills like going to the toilet, feeding themselves, washing their hands, using a tissue, dressing, and undressing.
- ⇒ Get your child to try on their new uniform to get used to it; if your child has sensory sensitivities, talk to their new setting about this and agree any adjustments that may be needed.
- ⇒ Does your child know who'll be collecting them each day after school? Knowing this can help ease some worries and make the routine more predictable.
- ⇒ Reassure your child that it's OK to make mistakes, and encourage them to stay interested in practical activities to develop their concentration skills.
- ⇒ Talk to their new teacher about what is important to them, sharing how they communicate, what and who is important to them, their individual SEND needs, how they like to be supported, their likes, dislikes and hopes for the future.



Resources/ Signposting:

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/#>

Livewell <https://www.livewellnorthlincolnshire.org.uk/>

Family Hubs <https://www.northlincs.gov.uk/people-health-and-care/our-family-hubs/>

Makaton <https://www.makaton.org/>

North Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum <https://nlpf.co.uk/>

SENDIASS <https://www.nlsendiass.org.uk/>

Contact <https://contact.org.uk/about-contact/contact-us/>

Moving on to Secondary School



The shift from the nurturing environment of primary school to the more independent world of secondary education can feel overwhelming. Your child may seem ready to move on from primary school, but not quite ready for the leap to secondary. However, with the right preparation, you can make this transition smoother and reduce some of those apprehensions.

Getting to school

- ◇ If your child will be walking to school, complete this journey with them during the Summer break. Try different routes until they find their favourite. Time this, so they can decide a time they need to set off in a morning.
- ◇ Bus journeys—walk with your child to the bus stop and time this journey. Ensure they know the bus number and have their bus pass or money stored in a handy part of their uniform. Share the rules and expectations while using the shared bus.
- ◇ Some children may have special transport arrangements for example - taxi, minibus, door to door support etc. You can explore if this is an option with NL the transport team.

Information sharing

- ◇ If your child has a SEN/D need or as a family you are receiving support from professionals, request a multi-agency meeting to share key information.
- ◇ Ensure that as a parent you have a named contact at the secondary school and the best way of contacting them (usually SENDCo).
- ◇ If your child has an EHCP, ensure the secondary school is invited to the last Primary School annual review.
- ◇ You could complete a 'one page profile' with your child to share with their new school.
- ◇ As a parent / carer, you may wish to arrange a meeting with the SENDCo yourself to discuss and share key information.

Developing independence

- ◇ Time—keeping is key at secondary school as pupils need to move from class to class independently—spend time familiarising with lesson start times and polishing up time skills.
- ◇ Timetables—these are often shared with pupils in the first week, read this together and talk about time and distance from classrooms—extra visits can be arranged to support this.
- ◇ Budgeting—your child may require a pre-paid card to pay for their lunches. Discuss a daily budget as the menu options may be tempting and they can become frivolous!
- ◇ Daily checklist—this can ensure they have correct equipment and books each day and homework they need to complete.

What to expect

- ◇ Attend any open evenings and transition events with your child to develop building and staff familiarity.
- ◇ Purchase uniform together and listen to your child's opinions—uniform needs to follow regulations, but your child needs to feel comfortable and happy as well.
- ◇ Share menu options and discuss these.
- ◇ You may wish to arrange a visit to the school on a regular school day so that your child can see it in action—this can usually be arranged by contacting the school.
- ◇ Avoid answering your child's questions with 'I don't know' and rather with 'We can write that down and ask a member of staff' to avoid prolonged worry.

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<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/#>

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Makaton <https://www.makaton.org/>

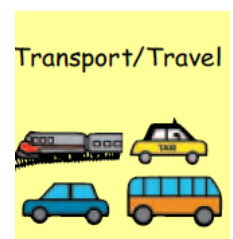
North Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum <https://nlpf.co.uk/>

SENDIASS <https://www.nlsendiass.org.uk/>

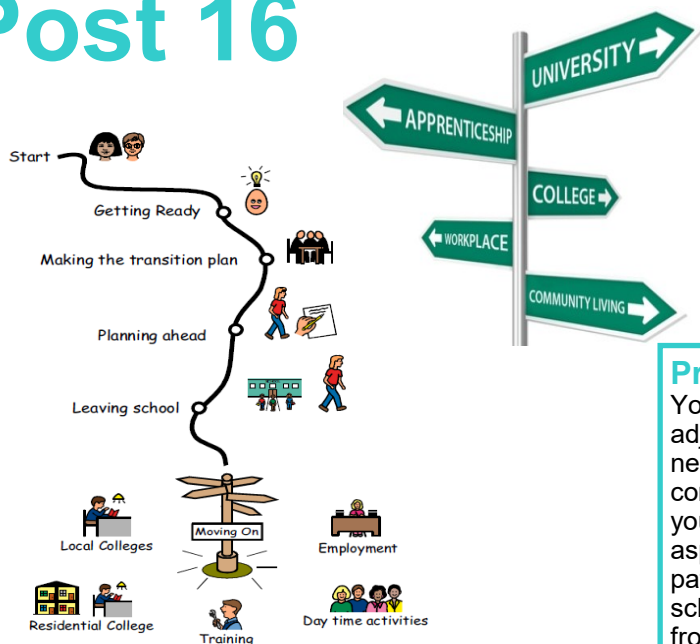
Contact <https://contact.org.uk/about-contact/contact-us/>

Starting secondary school - BBC Parents' Toolkit - BBC Bitesize

School transport and travel passes - North Lincolnshire Council



Post 16



There are lots of things for you and your young adult to consider when leaving school, and choosing the next step of their journey: interests, skills, experience, qualifications, location and support.

Once your young adult has chosen their next path, they may need some help to make this transition as smooth and worry free as it can be.

Pupils with an EHCP

All young people with SEND should get support from school in preparing for adulthood but there should be an extra focus on this if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan. If your child has an EHCP, planning for the future starts at age 13 (Year 9) and should:

- involve the young person in planning their future and making decisions.
- involve parents and carers so they can support the young person make choices.
- ensure young people and their families know the key people who can help (for example, the Special Educational Needs (SEN) team).
- ensure the young person can successfully go onto college, training, work or day services after school.
- ensure the young person continues to receive the support they need as an adult.

From year 9 onwards annual reviews of EHCP's should have a focus on transition planning and should involve appropriate health, social and education professionals. This may be referred to as the Transition Review and allows sufficient time to start thinking and planning for their future options.

Resources/ Signposting:

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/#>
 Livewell <https://www.livewellnorthlincolnshire.org.uk/>
 Makaton <https://www.makaton.org/>
 North Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum <https://nlpf.co.uk/>
 SENDIASS <https://www.nlsendiass.org.uk/>
 Family Hubs <https://www.northlincs.gov.uk/people-health-and-care/our-family-hubs/>
 Contact <https://contact.org.uk/about-contact/contact-us/>

Preparing for adulthood

Young people with SEND may need extra support or adjustments to achieve the outcomes they want. They need to learn, work and be full participants of their community. Preparation for adulthood is all about young people gaining choice and control over their aspirations and opportunities. There are many pathways that pupils can follow when they leave school. The skills to access these should be taught from the earliest Primary school years and always follow a person centred approach.

Further advice on this can be found below:

[SEND Local Offer](#) | [Transition - SEND Local Offer](#)

[SEND Local Offer](#) | [Preparing for Adulthood - Support - SEND Local Offer](#)

Practical transition tips:

- ⇒ Complete a transition meeting with the next provider and your child's current secondary school—share key information and use this to ask questions you may still have.
- ⇒ Additional visits—complete additional visits to the new setting to familiarise with the layout/ key staff.
- ⇒ Photos—take photos of the new setting and key staff for your young person to familiarise with before the start date.
- ⇒ Ask for a map—look at a map together and plan out routes to key areas including the toilet, classrooms and cafeteria.
- ⇒ Establish a point of contact / key person and ask for their contact details prior to the start date.
- ⇒ Structure of the day—whether it be a work place or education setting, ask about timings and the structure of the day and talk about this together.
- ⇒ Familiarise your young adult with any new travel arrangements—time to leave the house, bus routes, payment of transport, drop off points and establish any familiar faces they may see during their journey.
- ⇒ Lunch time—talk about where and how they will get their lunch and pay for this.
- ⇒ Encourage independence through time keeping skills and checklists. Try to encourage getting clothing and essentials out the night before.

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the 'SEND register'?

A SEND Register is a list of all the pupils in a school who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or a disability. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCo) and staff monitor those pupils who need extra help and ensure they receive targeted support to enable them to make good progress. The SEN Register must be managed following guidance from the SEND Code of Practice, but it is not a guarantee of specific provision for your child.

What is the role of the SENDCo?

The role of the SENCo, or Special Educational Needs Coordinator, is to assess, plan and monitor the progress of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The SENCo has a critical role to play in ensuring that children with SEND within a school receive the support they need. SENCos must be a qualified teachers. They oversee the strategic development of SEN policy and provision and ensure the implementation of the SEN policy on a day-to-day basis.

What if I don't think my child is ready for school?

This is a very common worry, so you are not alone. It is important that you share your concerns with professionals such as your child's current setting, health visitor, new school teacher or new school SENDCo. They should be able to ease your worries and give you some advice and tips to support your child through this transition.

How do we support children who mask in school through transitions?

You know your child best, so it is important that you share your child's needs and worries with their setting. If your child is worrying, it is likely that another child is too! Ask for photos of the new teacher, support staff or other key professionals as well as setting photographs if possible. These will give your child a visual support to prepare themselves for a new change.

I struggle with face to face meeting with professionals—how can the setting help me?

Share your worries with the setting—do this over the phone, by letter or an email (usually on the school or setting website). Most settings should be able to arrange video or telephone calls instead of face to face meetings, if you find this easier. If you find walking and talking easier, ask if you could meet this way—most settings are very accommodating and want to work with you.

What is a one page profile and how could it help my child?

A one page profile is a snap shot of your child and may include their strengths, needs, likes and dislikes. They often include a photograph of your child and can provide a one-page overview for professionals to see and learn at a glance. Contact the parent carer forum for a template info@nlpf.co.uk

What are my child's options when leaving school?

At the age of 16, young people with SEND have four options:

- Staying on at school – sixth form.
- Going to a local further education college – mainstream.
- Work-based learning and apprenticeships.
- Going to a specialist further education college.

If none of these options are deemed appropriate, pupils may be eligible for home tuition or other bespoke education packages may be devised through professional and student – family agreement. More information can be found on the Local Offer.

Who else can help if I have tried with my child's setting already?

SENDIASS stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability, Information, Advice and Support Service. SENDIASS is a free service for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their parents and carers, living in North Lincolnshire. The service is impartial and offers confidential information, advice and support in relation to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and related health and social care matters. [SENDIASS | North Lincolnshire](#)

North Lincolnshire

Services and signposting available to parents / carers

North Lincolnshire Services:

- [School admissions: How to apply - GOV.UK](#)
- [SEND Local Offer | North Lincolnshire Special Educational Needs & Disability](#)
- North Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum <https://nlpf.co.uk/>
- [SENDIASS | North Lincolnshire](#)
- [Getting ready for school - North Lincolnshire Council](#)
- Livewell <https://www.livewellnorthlincolnshire.org.uk/>
- Family Hubs <https://www.northlincs.gov.uk/people-health-and-care/our-family-hubs/>
- [SEND Local Offer | Preparing for Adulthood - Support - SEND Local Offer](#)

Other signposting:

- Kids <https://www.kids.org.uk/contact/>
- IPSEA <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/>
- Supporting SEND children settle into school document <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/support-for-send-children/supporting-your-child-special-educational-needs-settle-school>
- Parent Kind <https://www.parentkind.org.uk/#>
- Makaton <https://www.makaton.org/>
- Carer's Support <https://carerssupportcentre.com/>
- Contact <https://contact.org.uk/about-contact/contact-us/>



This document was devised in May 2025 by the Education Inclusion SEND Teaching Team, in collaboration with the North Lincolnshire Parent Forum.

SENDCos in EYFS settings and schools should share this with new starters but it can also be shared by wider professionals in Health and Social care.