

Next Steps: Starting school...



Transition in the Early Years:
Good Practice and Guidance
for Schools and Settings

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Introduction

Transition in the early years is a significant time for young children and their parents/ carers, and represents an important step in a child's development. Transition at early years may refer to the child starting at an Early Years setting, starting school or moving from the foundation year into Key Stage One.

These times of change can be challenging for children and anxiety-provoking for parents/ carers, particularly when the child is vulnerable or has special educational needs and/or a disability that require understanding and support over the transition.

The aim of this document is to provide good practice guidance for schools and settings across Devon to support effective transition arrangements in the Early Years. This includes guidance at a universal level as well as providing guidance specifically in relation to vulnerable groups and those at greater risk of poorer outcomes over transition, for example, Children in Care (CiC) and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

This document draws upon recent research and guidance such as the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) statutory framework and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of practice. It references examples of effective practice that have impacted on outcomes for children and their families shared by early years' providers within Devon.

This guidance incorporates the following key principles:

- *Unique child* - Every child is different and all children can be vulnerable at times of change. Children who have SEND will need additional and flexible support.
- *Positive relationships* - Parents and carers should be closely involved in the process of transition and their thoughts and opinions should be listened to.
- *Enabling environments* - Children manage transitions better when there is good communication between settings and change takes place gradually over a period of time.
- *Learning and development* - The transition process should be one that continues a child's learning journey and previous experiences should be valued and built upon. This guidance is separated into three strands, each of which is linked to the Devon Graduated Response toolkit.

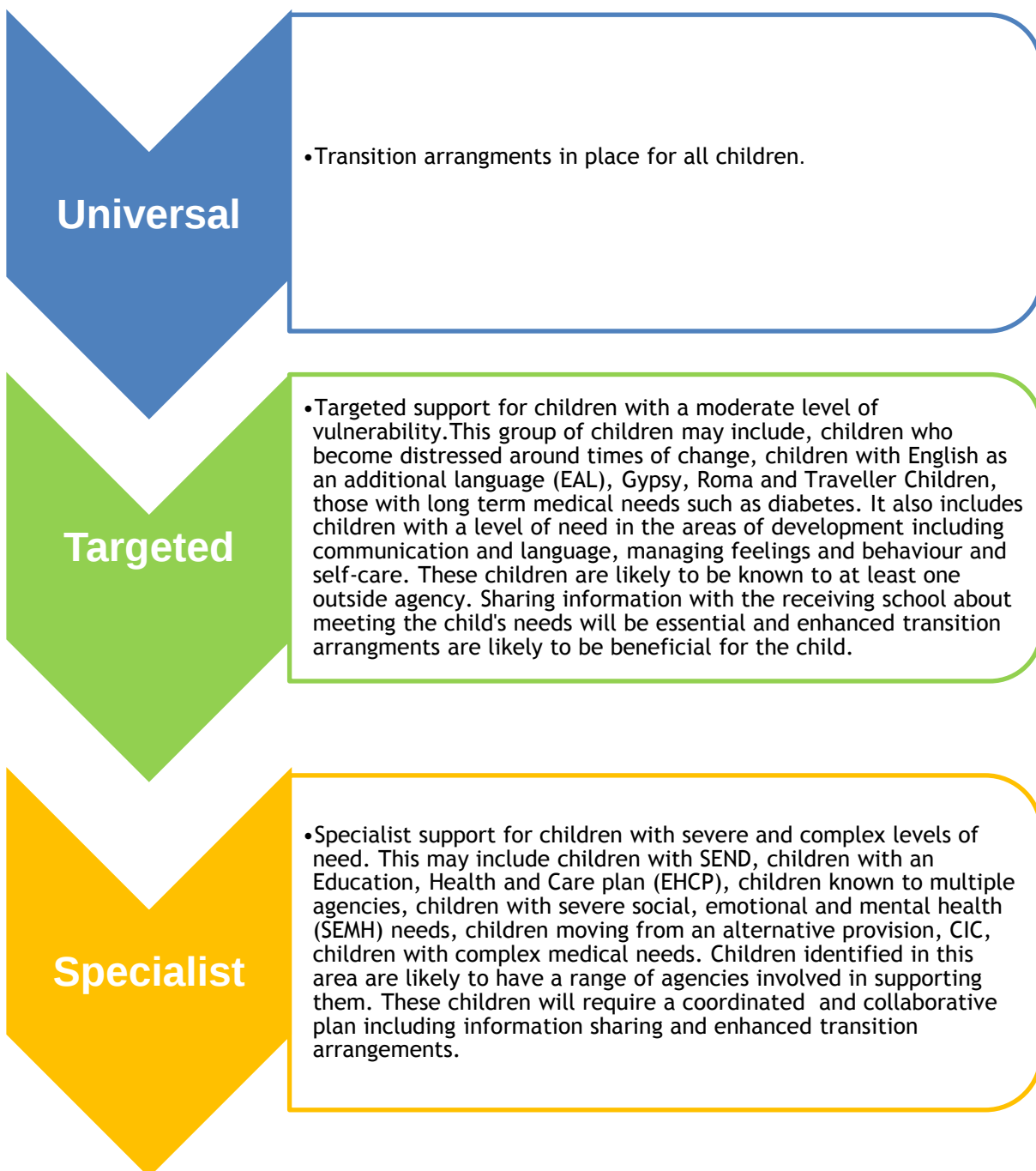
Where children are also under any form of Safeguarding process then it is key that careful consideration is given to ensuring that this forms part of the transition plan. This should include what information should be shared, how this information is shared and most importantly, how the child's emotional wellbeing and learning needs are supported. There is a useful 'one minute guide' for staff to ensure the effective transfer of children's records where safeguarding is a concern. This should be used in conjunction with the guidance in this document. For example, see number 6 (transfer of child protection safeguarding files) and other guidance here:

<https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/safeguarding-and-compliance/safeguarding/one-minute-guides>

How to identify those in need of support

Effective transition support is important for all children and this requires universal arrangements to be in place, however it is also an important role of Early Years practitioners to be able to identify children requiring additional levels of support - either through Targeted or Specialist intervention.

This following visual outlines the key differences between the three levels and these terms will be used throughout this guidance



What are the key factors for a successful Early Years transition?

Overview

- Successful transition should be seen as central to a child's early development and emotional wellbeing
- Transitions should be seen as a process not an event, and should be planned for in advance and discussed with children and parents

Working in Partnership

- Settings should work in partnership with parents throughout the transition process
- Excellent communication and partnership should be maintained between providers of early years education and schools

Collecting and Sharing of Knowledge

- Early years providers should know precisely where children and young people with SEND are in their learning and development. They should ensure the insights of parents and those of children inform decisions
- If a child moves between settings, information held by the first setting regarding children's levels of learning and development, as well as suggested next steps should be shared with any receiving providers
- Practitioners should also encourage parents and/or carers to share information including their progress check with the staff of the new provision

Preparation

- There should be early identification and support, including effective assessment of SEND
- Settings should have settling in processes that are flexible in order to meet the needs of the individual child
- For school transitions, children will benefit from visits to their school to familiarise themselves with the environment and to meet the teacher and key staff.
- Settings should plan for transitions and make sure provision is in place to meet children's needs

Procedures and Systems in Place

- Early years setting and schools should have transition and induction procedures in place and evaluate these annually.
- Settings should employ a structured transition programme with a clear time-scale.
- Staff training should be provided for the inclusion of SEND and other vulnerable groups.
- Settings should use a transition document that records the child's levels of learning and development, and includes significant information about the child's strengths, difficulties and support needs (see appendix D). An initial transition planning meeting should be held early in the autumn term for children with SEND (see Appendix A). Parents should be invited to share any concerns and be fully involved in the planning for transition process.
- Support should be in place to scaffold the transition to formal learning with advanced play.

Transition into an Early Years Setting

The following strategies and ideas should be considered to support children when they transition into an early years setting.

Universal

- Strong supportive links should be established between home and setting.
- Building a warm and a secure relationship with a key person is crucial for the child, and parents should feel involved and consulted.
- Information sharing should include how the child communicates their needs, e.g. when they are tired or hungry.
- Many settings introduce a flexible settling process around the needs of the individual child. They may carry out a home visit and ensure that the key person forms a relationship with the child and their family at the earliest opportunity.

Targeted

- Settings should identify children who are at risk of having transition difficulties as early as possible.
- Knowledge should be shared about children's individual needs by the parents and any other agencies if they are involved. Plans should be made within the setting to ensure provision is in place to meet these needs. A Transition Planning meeting template could be used to support this (Appendix A).
- Some children may struggle to separate from their parent/carer. They may benefit from a more gradual settling in period that builds up over time. Tools can be used to support separation such as setting up a family photo book of key family members to reference with the child. Other tools could include setting up a simple visual timetable that shows key events in the day, particularly when they are due to go home. This may be particularly beneficial for children who experience Speech and Language delay or anxiety.

Specialist

- As above, settings should identify children who are at risk of having transition difficulties and who may need specialist support as early as possible.
- Knowledge should be shared about children's individual needs by the parents and any other agencies if they are involved. This should be done through a multiagency meeting. Practitioners should aim to provide an enhanced transition for children who have significant and persistent needs as early as possible. This is usually provided at an individual level and will be highly personalised.
- Plans should be made within the setting to ensure provision is in place to meet these needs. A Transition Planning meeting template could be used to support this (Appendix A).
- Meeting with other professionals prior to the child's admission will be the start of building relationships and ensuring that the setting is ready for the child.

- Children may make additional visits to their new setting accompanied by a parent. A photo book that includes information regarding new premises, key people and daily routines may be developed.

Transition into Reception

The following strategies and ideas should be considered to support children when they transition into Reception

Universal

- Best practice includes Reception class teachers visiting the nursery/preschool to observe and get to know the children. They should also have time to discuss each child individually with their Key Person.
- Practitioners from the Pre-school/ Nursery may visit the school to share information and offer suggestions for the physical space to ensure there are some familiar features for the children to enable them to feel comfortable and relaxed in the new environment.
- The school may offer visits from the Pre-School/ Nursery setting to the Reception Class for children in advance of them starting in Reception.
- Practitioners from the Pre-School/ Nursery setting will be able to offer suggestions on planning for the child during the first few weeks of term. Some settings introduce “starting school” in their role-play and provide resources such as school uniforms and book bags.
- Reception staff should be available to parents to facilitate relationships and answer specific questions/ receive information.
- Thought should also be given to supporting the end of the child’s relationships within the Pre-School setting.

Targeted

- Settings should identify children who are at risk of having transition difficulties as early as possible.
- A transition meeting early in the term should be arranged and knowledge should be shared about children’s individual needs by the parents and any other agencies if they are involved. Plans should be made within the setting to ensure provision is in place to meet these needs, e.g. small group work to develop communication skills, adult support within the continuous provision to model play and interaction, an emphasis on developing self-help skills at meal times and toilet times. A Transition Planning meeting template could be used to support this (Appendix A).
- Thought should also be given to supporting the end of the child’s relationships within the Pre-School setting.

Specialist

- As above, Pre-School/ Nurseries should identify children who are at risk of having transition difficulties and who may need specialist support as early as possible.

- Knowledge should be shared about children's individual needs by the parents and any other agencies if they are involved. This should be done through a multi-agency meeting. Practitioners should aim to provide an enhanced transition for children who have significant and persistent needs as early as possible. This is usually provided at an individual level and will be highly personalised.
- Plans should be made within the Reception classroom to ensure provision is in place to meet these needs. A Transition Planning meeting template could be used to support this (Appendix A).
- Meeting with other professionals prior to the child's admission will be the start of building relationships and ensuring that the setting is ready for the child.
- Children may make additional visits to their new setting accompanied by an additional support worker. A photo book that includes information regarding new premises, key people and daily routines may be developed.
- Thought should also be given to supporting the end of the child's relationships within the Pre-School setting.

Transition into year one

Moving into year one is recognised as an anxious time for some and this can impact on progress and wellbeing. The following strategies and ideas should be considered to support children when they transition into year one.

Universal

- Practitioners and Year One teachers should work together to ensure that a child's transition between the EYFS and Year One is seamless.
- Early Years practitioners should make sure children's experiences in the final year of the EYFS are valuable, and prepare the ground for Year One. It is important that Year One builds on the successful principles and approach encapsulated in the EYFS curriculum (2018).
- The Reception class teacher should share the outcomes of the EYFS profile and identify areas of strength and areas where further support to develop should be considered.
- Some schools plan for the Year One teacher to spend time within the Reception class prior to the children transferring and plan the first term of Year One around EYFS practice.
- Year One staff should be available to parents to facilitate relationships and answer specific questions/ receive information.
- Thought should also be given to supporting the end of the child's relationships within the Reception setting.

Targeted

- Parents/carers should be given clear information about the transition into Year One.

- Reception staff should identify children who are at risk of having transition difficulties as early as possible.
- A transition meeting early in the term should be arranged and knowledge should be shared about children's individual needs by the parents and any other agencies if they are involved. Plans should be made within the Year One classroom to ensure provision is in place to meet these needs. A Transition Planning meeting template could be used to support this (Appendix A).
- Thought should also be given to supporting the end of the child's relationships within the Pre-School setting.

Specialist

- As above, Reception staff should identify children who are at risk of having transition difficulties and who may need specialist support as early as possible.
- Knowledge should be shared about children's individual needs by the parents and any other agencies involved. This should be done through a multi-agency meeting. Practitioners should aim to provide an enhanced transition for children who have significant and persistent needs as early as possible. This is usually provided at an individual level and will be highly personalised.
- Plans should be made within the Year One classroom to ensure provision is in place to meet these needs. A Transition Planning meeting template could be used to support this (Appendix A).
- There needs to be a clear focus on developing communication between children, staff and parents/carers.
- Thought should also be given to supporting the end of the child's relationships within the Reception setting.

How to support parents/carers

Local authorities, Early Years providers and schools should enable parents to share their knowledge about their child and give them confidence that their views and contributions are valued and will be acted upon. (SEND code of practice, 2015).

Good practice ideas:

- Plan for transition processes at the earliest opportunity. Be ready to provide information about settings and schools to help parents/carers make the right choice for their child. See attached transition timescale in Appendix C.
- Involve parents/carers in setting and achieving targets that will contribute to their child's successful transition e.g. being able to communicate their needs.
- Invite parents/carers to a joint meeting with new staff and any professionals involved with the child. Help parents and carers to prepare for the meeting by discussing possible questions and concerns.
- Share information with parents regarding any changes of professionals or systems used by the setting or school.
- Provide parents with a named person who they can contact if they have any questions.
- Encourage parents/carers to share information about their child including strengths, interests and any additional needs. An example of this is provided in Appendix B.
- Respond sensitively to parents/carers anxieties.

Transition Planning Meeting

Transition planning meetings should be held for those children considered to be within the specialist or targeted area for support. They should be held at the latest in the summer term of the child transferring to school. The aim of the transition planning meeting is to share information with the receiving school to aid their planning of provision and support when the child moves to the school and to plan what the transition to school will look like. Please see Appendix A for a template of the form that could guide this discussion.

Who should attend?

Those attending should include: the setting's SENDCo, the child's key person, the primary school SENDCo, receiving teacher, parents/carers and any other agency involved in supporting the child if needed.

Should we still meet if the parent is unable to attend?

Best endeavours should be made to include the parent in the meeting as they are key people to involve. If this is not possible due to special circumstances (e.g. medical or legal reasons) a Transition Planning Meeting can be held without parents. If a meeting happens without parents and the parents still have Parental Responsibility (PR) their views should be collected before the meeting and the information discussed should be shared with parents, either face to face or over the telephone after the meeting.

References and Useful Links

DfE (2015) SEN and disability code of practice

DfE (2017) Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage

Early Years foundation stage profile: 2018 handbook

Devon's Graduated Approach to SEND Support: EYFS (Babcock LDP and Devon County Council)

SEN and disability in the early years: A toolkit (Council for Disabled children - 4 children)

A guide for working with parents of children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (Council for Disabled children - 4 children)

Understanding transitions in the early years (2013) Anne O'Connor

Agencies that may provide transition support and advice

- Devon Information Advice and Support (DIAS)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (Behaviour Support) Advisory Team
- Communication and Interaction Team
- Nursery Plus
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Educational Psychology Team

Advice and support may be obtained from the Babcock LDP Early Years Consultancy team who provide support and advice in the wide range of early years settings and schools across Devon and beyond, in relation to young children's learning and development.

Appendix A – Transition Planning Meeting Template

This should be used for all children identified as requiring a specialist transition and recommended for children requiring targeted transition support

Name of Child	Date of Birth	School Start Date:
Name of Parents/ Carers		Address
Telephone Number		Email Address

Date of Meeting	Current Setting	Receiving School
Level of Transition Agreed: Targeted Specialist (please circle)		
Agencies involved in supporting the child and their family		
Who attended the meeting today		
Child's Views	Parent/ Carers Views	

Child's Strengths		What is currently in place that works for the child? E.g. Strategies/ interventions, access arrangements in place, additional provision. What should be avoided?	
Actions		Who will do this	By what date

I agree for this form to be shared with relevant professionals.

Parent/ Carer Signature	Date

Set a date for another transition planning meeting or the review meeting (reviews should take place within 6 weeks of the child starting school).

Date and Time	Venue	Who will be invited

A copy will be sent to those who attended the meeting and to those who will be invited to the next meeting

Appendix B - Pen Picture (to be completed by the parent)

Name of child:	Present Setting:	Receiving setting/school:
My child's strengths and interests:		
What I would like you to know about my child:		
How you can help my child:		
Any other information:		

This sheet is designed to share with receiving practitioners/teachers so that they can get to know your child and so that they have some ideas about what is helpful for your child at their new setting/school.

Appendix C - Timeline for Transition from an Early Years setting into school

During any transition the needs of the child and family should be at the heart of the process. Routines and procedures should be flexible. For any child who has additional needs an enhanced transition process should be planned for. Effective communication between setting and school is essential as the process should be seen as continuing the learning journey.

	Autumn 1 st half	Autumn 2 nd half	Spring 1 st half	Spring 2 nd half	Summer 1 st half	Summer 2 nd half	Autumn 1 st half
Universal	Display information about local schools and application dates.	Ensure all parents have applied for schools.	Final reminder to parents regarding deadline for school applications (January).		National offer day Ensure that all children have been allocated a school place. Share transition documents with parents and send to school.		Schools and settings meet to evaluate process
Targeted	Allow for settling in period Identify children needing an enhanced transition.	Develop and begin to implement plans for enhanced transition		Schools and settings to arrange SEND meetings where possible.	School staff to visit Early Years settings. Plan for enhanced transition meetings and visit arrangements.		
Specialist	Assess needs and identify children requiring enhanced support above and beyond what a setting is expected to provide. Discuss with parents and other appropriate services. Consider EHCP request for most complex children.	Identify children needing an enhanced transition. Discuss support with parents/carers. Need for school visits and meetings. If not already done so, consider requests for EHCP.		Following school allocation, discussion and support needed by parents/carers. Setting to liaise with school SENDCo and relevant professionals to discuss and plan transition arrangements.			

Appendix D - Early Years Foundation Stage - Transition Document

Early Years Setting:

Telephone number:

E-mail:

Child's name:

Name child is known by:

Date of birth:

Age: Years Months

Gender

Date child started at setting:

Sessions / hours attended per week:

Name of setting Manager:

Name of Key Person:

Name of parents / carers:

Language(s) spoken at home:

Significant information to support the child's transition

Personal, Social and Emotional Development		
Making Relationships Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	Self-confidence and self-awareness Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	Managing feelings and behaviour Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG
Significant comments: 		
Communication and Language		
Listening and attention Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	Understanding Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	Speaking Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG
Significant comments: 		
Physical Development		
Moving and handling Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	Health and self-care Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	
Significant comments: 		

Literacy		
Reading Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	Writing Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	
Significant comments:		
Mathematics		
Numbers Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	Shape, space and measures Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	
Significant comments:		
Understanding the World		
People and communities Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	The world Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	Technology Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG
Significant comments:		

Expressive Arts and Design	
Exploring and using media and materials Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG	Being imaginative Birth-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60+ months, ELG
Significant comments: 	
Characteristics of effective learning - how a child learns	
Playing and exploring (engagement) • Finding out and exploring • Playing with what they know • Being willing to 'have a go' Active learning (motivation) • Being involved and concentrating • Keeping on trying • Enjoying achieving what they set out to do Creating and thinking critically (thinking) • Having their own ideas • Making links (using what they already know to learn new things) • Choosing ways to do things	
Child's voice 	

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Parent's / Carer's voice

I / we give permission for this information to be shared with appropriate settings.

Signature: _____ **(Parents / Carers)** **Date:**

Signature: _____ **(Key Person)** **Date:**

Signature: _____ **(Manager)** **Date:**

Early Years Foundation Stage Child's Individual Needs

Please include this page for any child with additional needs unless information has previously been sent to the school.

Name of child:

Date of birth:

Main area of need - please circle as appropriate

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Behaviour, emotional and social development
- Sensory and / or physical development

Allergies or dietary requirements:

Medication:

Name of SENDCO in setting:

Please attach any relevant information that will support the child's inclusion in school e.g. Individual Education Plans, target setting, details of adaptations.

Has the child been in receipt of funding to support inclusion? (Please provide dates and level of support)

Has the child and their family been involved in a Team Around the Family process?
 Are child's details stored on Right for Children? (If yes, please provide the name of the Lead Professional)

Does the child have an Education Health and Care Plan?

Is the child looked after by a local authority? (A Child in Care) Yes / No - (circle as appropriate)

If yes, please attach a copy of the most recent EYFEP.

Other professionals involved	Name	Contact number
GP		
Paediatrician		
Health Visitor		
Speech and Language Therapist		
Portage		
Physiotherapist		
Children's Centre		
Social Worker		
Educational Psychologist		
Social. Emotional Mental Health Team		
Nursery Plus		
Other		

Signature: _____ (Parents / Carers) Date: _____

Signature: _____ (Key Person) Date: _____

Signature: _____ (Manager) Date: _____